

U.S. company discontinues key death penalty drug

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COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — The sole U.S. manufacturer of a key lethal injection drug says it's discontinuing the drug's production because it couldn't guarantee Italian authorities that it wouldn't be used in executions.

Hospira Inc., of Lake Forest, Ill., said Friday that its plant in Italy was the only viable place where the company could produce sodium thiopental.

Hospira spokesman Dan Rosenberg told the Associated Press that Italian authorities insisted the company prove the drug would never end up being used by states to execute condemned inmates. Rosenberg said the company determined after discussions with Italy and Hospira wholesalers that it could not make such a guarantee.

A shortage of sodium thiopental has disrupted execution schedules around the U.S. since last spring when Ohio nearly postponed an execution when it almost ran out.

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