

# FDA drug approvals reached 18-year high in 2014

January 2 2015, by Matthew Perrone

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The Food and Drug Administration approved 41 first-of-a-kind drugs in 2014, including a record number of medicines for rare diseases, pushing the agency's annual tally of drug approvals to its highest level in 18 years.

The 2014 approval list includes 15 drugs for so-called orphan diseases, which are rare conditions and disorders that affect fewer than 200,000 people in the U.S. Last year's tally, which included drugs for rare cancer and metabolic disorders, exceeded the 13 [orphan drugs](#) approved in 2012.

The record-setting number reflects the drug industry's ongoing shift toward specialty drugs for niche conditions, which often come with extra patent protections, streamlined approvals and higher price tags.

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