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The medical industry is undergoing a radical transformation, thanks to recent advances in 3D (otherwise known as additive) printing. 3D printing creates three dimensional objects by building up layers of material. A commonly-used analogy is the building of a structure with layer upon layer of lego bricks. Bioprinting, in turn, takes the basic premise of 3D printing and applies it in the context of human cells and tissues—one of bioprinting's most dramatic applications is the layered printing of living cells to form a 3D organ structure.

The patent eligibility of bioprinted products and processes has not been squarely addressed by the legislature or tested in the courts. Arlene Chow and Nitya Anand of Hogan Lovells explain what could be done in the future.

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