



Senate Labor & Industry Committee

Public Hearing on Life Sciences

April 1st, 2025

Good afternoon, Chairs Farry, Kearney, and other members of the Senate Institutional Sustainability & Innovation Committee. My name is Laura Manion, and I am President of the Chester County Chamber of Business and Industry (CCCBI). With me is Alex Rahn, Pennsylvania Principal at AxAdvocacy, the Chamber's Government Affairs Consultant.

While it's up to interpretation where the definition of life sciences begins and ends, it's undoubtedly clear that these fields are responsible for innovations that have saved an unquantifiable number of lives, improved the standard of living for everyone, and created livelihoods for millions of Americans.

The life sciences have a deep history in Pennsylvania and have been a key driver of economic development in the Commonwealth. CCCBI anticipates that will continue to be the case for the foreseeable future.

Life sciences create life-saving medications, therapies, crops, alternative fuels, and procedures – with applications in healthcare, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and environmental science. At its core, life sciences involve research and innovation aimed at improving human health, developing medical treatments, advancing food production, and understanding biological systems.

To illustrate how central life sciences are to Pennsylvania, about 1/3rd of the Commonwealth's top 100 employers is a company in a life science industry.¹

¹ See: "Pennsylvania's Largest Employers" *Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry*, (Q2 2024), https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dli/documents/cwia/products/top-50-emp-ind/pagovcom_1000.pdf

A few other key figures from our chamber partner, LifeScience PA...

Life Science Impact on the Commonwealth:

- Annual Labor Income is \$18.4 Billion
- Annual Tax Revenue is \$4.9 Billion
- And Total Economic Output to the Commonwealth is \$61.9 Billion

Chester County has long been a leader in life sciences, a legacy that can be traced back to one of its most influential scientific pioneers—G. Raymond Rettew. A chemist and entrepreneur, Rettew played a pivotal role in the mass production of penicillin during World War II. His groundbreaking work, conducted right here in Chester County and spun out of his science cultivating mushrooms, revolutionized antibiotic manufacturing and saved countless lives on the battlefield and beyond. His contributions cemented the county's reputation as a hub for pharmaceutical innovation, laying the foundation for the robust life sciences industry we see today.

Rettew's work is emblematic of Chester County's commitment to scientific progress. His innovations in fermentation and pharmaceutical production created a ripple effect, attracting research institutions, biotech companies, and life sciences leaders to the region. This enduring spirit of discovery continues to drive economic growth, workforce development, and medical breakthroughs.

Today, the life sciences sector remains a pillar of Chester County's economy, contributing thousands of high-paying jobs across pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, and medical research. The region is home to some of the nation's most innovative companies in gene therapy, oncology, and medical device manufacturing. These businesses not only support local families but also foster a strong ecosystem of suppliers, educators, and service providers.

One of our members, Novocure, a global oncology company with growing operations in Pennsylvania, is developing groundbreaking cancer therapies through Tumor Treating Fields—a non-invasive technology extending survival for patients with some of the most aggressive cancers. This level of innovation is happening right here, driven by the local workforce, and backed by Pennsylvania's research infrastructure and business environment.

Policymakers have a critical role in creating an environment where life sciences companies can grow and stay rooted in Pennsylvania. Companies like Novocure choose communities where infrastructure, talent, and support align—and they stay in communities where innovation is valued. The more we invest in innovation at the state level, the more we retain these job creators

Beyond direct employment, the life sciences industry fuels economic activity across real estate, construction, and professional services. As companies expand, they invest in laboratories, office spaces, and production facilities—creating new opportunities for growth while ensuring that Pennsylvania remains at the forefront of global medical advancements.

As we look to the future, experts anticipate technologies like artificial intelligence, high-performance computing, and nanotechnologies to unlock breakthroughs in across the industry; from discovering new drugs, to tailoring therapies towards individual patients.

To sustain and expand this critical industry, it is essential that we continue investing in **education, workforce development, and infrastructure**. Chester County's universities and research institutions play a vital role in preparing the next generation of scientists, engineers, and healthcare professionals. Strengthening partnerships between business, government, and academia will ensure that Pennsylvania remains a leader in life sciences innovation.

Additionally, housing and transportation policies must align with the needs of this growing industry. As more life sciences professionals seek to live and work in the region, we must address housing affordability and infrastructure improvements to support sustainable growth.

Chester County's life sciences sector is an engine of innovation, economic stability, and global health advancements. From the historic achievements of G. Raymond Rettew to today's cutting-edge biotech breakthroughs, our region has played—and must continue to play—a leading role in shaping the future of medicine.

From academic institutions and incubators to mid-size biotech firms and global players, Pennsylvania has all the ingredients to lead the nation in life sciences. But that leadership depends on our commitment to a long-term innovation strategy—one that includes smart policy, stable investment, and strong public-private partnerships.

I have worked directly with other chambers of commerce across Pennsylvania and of course Life Sciences Pennsylvania to advance advocacy efforts for more investment in life sciences. We have had many promising conversations with elected officials, such as Representative Paul Friel from Chester County, who is committed to seeing the life science sector flourish, by introducing legislation for early-stage start-up technology companies to sell their net operating losses and unused research and development tax credits to unrelated companies, converting their losses to capital. Qualifying businesses would be provided a valuable source of non-dilutive capital during the most vulnerable period of their development. Creative legislation such as this, as well as

wholehearted investment, will support the creation of jobs and serve to strengthen Pennsylvania's economy.

To be competitive, Pennsylvania must cultivate businesses on the leading edge of technology and life sciences. I urge this committee to support policies that sustain and strengthen our life sciences ecosystem by investing in workforce development, fostering innovation, and ensuring that Pennsylvania remains an attractive destination for scientific and medical research. By doing so, we honor our past while securing a prosperous and innovative future for generations to come.

As an organization that represents many businesses in this sector, CCCBI's members and I thank the Committee again for taking the time to assess how crucial the life sciences are to the Pennsylvania economy.

CCCBI stands ready to work with this Committee on finding policies that protect this industry's vitality and encourages continued innovation into the future. I look forward to answering any questions.

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