

“Think Big” to continue growth of CT’s life science industry

BioCT event with state and industry leaders focuses on the need for collaboration, workforce growth and supportive policies

NEW HAVEN, CT, USA, January 23, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [BioCT](#)- the trade organization for life sciences in Connecticut- today convened a discussion with Governor Ned Lamont, Chairs of the Connecticut General Assembly’s BioScience Caucus and other state leaders focusing on opportunities and challenges facing the industry in Connecticut ahead of the 2024 legislative session.

Connecticut has become a hub for the life sciences sector. Small startups along with some of the largest companies in the world call Connecticut home. The state is among the highest ranked nationally in terms of R&D investment, patents per capita, and an educated workforce. The state’s life sciences industry contributes nearly \$8 billion to the state GDP and more than 27,000 jobs.

“At BioCT, we look to grow the industry by focusing on three pillars--policy, people and promotion of all the innovation happening in life sciences in CT. Having such broad participation from the highest levels of Connecticut’s government is a testament to their level of commitment to our industry and its workforce,” said Jodie Gillon, President and CEO, BioCT.

In his opening remarks, Governor Lamont noted the strides Connecticut has made in making the state an appealing place for businesses, and how a continued focus on strong policies to support the industry will instill a sense of confidence to keep that investment here.

“The life sciences industry is another bright spot in Connecticut’s long history of innovation. Our state has become a hub for cutting edge biotech companies that are making critical advances that improve people’s lives. I look forward to continuing to work in partnership with BioCT to make sure that the industry and its workforce continues to thrive here” said Lamont.

Convened at Alexion, Astra Zeneca Rare Disease Center of Excellence in New Haven, the statewide event featured separate panel discussions focusing on economic challenges and opportunities, and workforce needs and solutions. Attendees included more than 250 municipal and state leaders, life science executives, and representatives from federal agencies and international consulates and missions.

The economics panel, moderated by Daniel O’Keefe, Commissioner Designate and Chief Innovation Officer for the Department of Economic Community Development, focused on issues such as R&D tax credits, grants and clusters, and highlighted best practices from neighboring states Massachusetts and New York. Panelists noted that Connecticut has three key ingredients for industry success: a sound investment infrastructure, a vibrant academic community, and policies to stimulate opportunities for business and workforce growth.

Finding and keeping a highly skilled workforce was the focus of the second panel discussion led by Matthew O’Donnell, JD, MHA, Senior Director State Government Affairs, Alexion, AstraZeneca Rare Disease. Panelists emphasized that Connecticut has several strong programs in place to foster the next generation of life science employees, such as STEM programs for middle and high school students, mentoring and coaching sessions for new employees, and a focus on identifying industry needs and strategies to fill those openings.

However, addressing both short- and long-term ways to encourage workforce growth will require stakeholders to double down on strategies such as creating robust training and workforce development opportunities and making a concerted effort to form stronger ties between the industry and academia.

Chairs of the state Legislature’s BioScience Caucus - Senators Tony Hwang and Christine Cohen and Representative David Yakarino - closed out the event. All three noted the excitement that growth of the industry in Connecticut has brought to the Caucus, and that Connecticut is “fertile ground” for continued growth.

Gillon continued: “Today was about listening, learning and engaging so that we can identify the next steps we need to take to maintain and grow Connecticut’s bioscience industry. I am thrilled by the level of engagement and action-oriented solutions discussed today, and I hope this will encourage positive conversations in our next state Legislative session.”

About BioCT

BioCT’s mission is to catalyze and accelerate growth in the life sciences with the goal of improving human health, by fostering a rich, innovative ecosystem and promoting Connecticut as a preferred destination for life science exploration and innovation. Learn more at www.bioct.org.

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