
CELEBRATING LIFE SCIENCES IN NEW JERSEY

LIFE SCIENCE WEEK
APRIL 20-24, 2015

With thanks to the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development for funding provided.
A Letter from BioNJ President and CEO Debbie Hart

As you might expect in a vital, fast-changing industry like the exciting researched-based life sciences, there have been lots of changes in the couple of years since NJBiz and BioNJ last teamed to bring you this special Life Sciences supplement celebrating Life Sciences Week, from April 20-24, 2015.

Here at home, we’ve recently expanded our mission and re-branded with an updated logo that proclaims us as BioNJ, The Gateway to Health, a message that reflects what the industry and our 400 Member Investor companies and stakeholders have always delivered: innovative drugs, therapies and cures that save and improve lives while lessening the burden of illness and disease on society.

It could be the kind of work being done by Dr. Stuart Peltz’s PTC Therapeutics in South Plainfield and his New Jersey-born company’s emerging success in battling rare and neglected diseases, receiving a first-ever drug approval worldwide — in this case in Europe — for a medicine that fights Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, a childhood muscle wasting disorder.

Or it could be Princeton-based Sologenix, where CEO Dr. Chris Schaber and his team are doing their part to combat terror threats by developing a vaccine against the toxin Ricin for the federal government, or working on a safer therapy for children afflicted with pediatric Crohn’s Disease.

Improving the quality of life and limiting health risks for the able-bodied are issues being met head on by still another of BioNJ’s Member Investors, like Agile Therapeutics CEO Al Altomari with its development of a once-weekly, low dose contraceptive patch for women that’s now in Phase 3 clinical development.

It’s critical work like this and so much more going on daily in the hundreds of start-ups, emerging companies and established firms here in New Jersey that put our State on the map for life sciences.

And be assured that New Jersey still enjoys its iconic standing as The Medicine Chest of the World, continuing to lead all states in the number of new drugs and therapies approved by the FDA.

Our life sciences companies received 32 new FDA-approved NME, BLAs and medical device approvals last year. And 2015 is off to an outstanding start with several new drug approvals for Actavis, Daiichi Sankyo, Eisai, Novartis, NPS Pharmaceuticals, and Pfizer and so many more expected in the coming months.

New Jersey’s life sciences companies are keeping the world’s medicine chest full by constantly searching for new drugs and therapies to conquer illness and disease because, as we like to say at BioNJ, Patients Can’t Wait.

The team at BioNJ and our Member Investors have embraced an expanded vision and mission aimed at fostering a vibrant life sciences ecosystem in New Jersey where Science is Supported, Companies are Created, Drugs are Developed and Patients are Paramount.

A couple of our life sciences leaders say they’re “bullish” on the industry while one even notes that the amount of capital flowing into New Jersey biotech firms is as good as any time in the past decade.

Beyond the dollars needed to keep the science pump primed, our State’s companies also look to stay on the cutting edge by being more sure-footed in areas key to any business, from finance and sales to leadership and team building.

The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development continues to support the Life Sciences Talent Network with job fairs and seminars offered to professionals to help keep their skills current or to find new opportunities.

In another article in the supplement, you’ll read where one veteran life sciences executive recruiter says companies are looking for industry professionals to fill multiple roles so that in addition to whatever technical knowledge they possess, it’s also important to show strength in “soft skills,” like the ability to lead, to negotiate or even to be savvy politically.

Part of our expanded mission at BioNJ includes a variety of services and resources we can provide through our Talent Services team, led by BioNJ VP, Talent Services, Vicki Gaddy. One key initiative includes the creation of the Executive Alliance for Life Science group, which is designed to connect local, seasoned industry experts with emerging businesses through advisory opportunities. In a recent undertaking, we are working closely with the Commercialization Center for Innovative Technologies in North Brunswick to help source experts for its new Executive-in-Residence program.

Another resource is The Academy at BioNJ, designed to provide employers and individual professionals with exceptional programs and resources that will serve to keep employees contemporary, creative and competitive, as well as train for those ‘soft skills’ reportedly now in critical demand.

Overall, our industry looks healthy and continues to grow and we look forward to helping to uphold that positive trend.

There will be an opportunity to showcase New Jersey’s progress when the region plays host in Philadelphia this June to BIO 2015, the largest life sciences convention of its kind in the world. Hope to see you there.

We’re excited about the future of our world-class offerings in life sciences in New Jersey and we’re honored here at BioNJ, The Gateway to Health, to serve such a vibrant and important, life-sustaining and enhancing industry.
MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2015
Life Sciences Week Kickoff Event and Rutgers Interdisciplinary Job Opportunities for Biomedical Scientists (iJOBS) First Annual Symposium
10 a.m.-2 p.m. | Rutgers University, Busch Student Center, 604 Bartholomew Road, Piscataway, NJ
Join us for the iJOBS Inaugural Annual Symposium! Dr. Abraham Abuchowski, CEO Prolong Pharmaceuticals, will respond to questions from students regarding the experience of transitioning from academia to industry and topics of concern to the trainees and faculty regarding non-academic careers. Network with iJOBS trainees, faculty and industrial partners, while discussing biomedical and life sciences career opportunities with regional experts.

TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2015
The Life Sciences Talent Networks Career Fair
9 a.m.-2 p.m. | Rutgers University, Livingston Student Center, 84 Joyce Kilmer Ave, Piscataway, NJ
Celebrating its fifth year, the Career Fair will feature innovative New Jersey life science companies looking to hire top industry talent.

Doing Deals, Funding and More, Part I
9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. | Commercialization Center for Innovative Technologies (CCIT), 675 U.S. Highway One, North Brunswick, NJ
During this two-day program, the experts from the BioMentorz team will cover a multitude of essential topics, such as VC campaigns, pitches, presentations, building a company-wide team, board management and more. Day one will focus on funding and pitching your business effectively.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2015
Doing Deals, Funding and More, Part II
9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. | Commercialization Center for Innovative Technologies (CCIT), 675 U.S. Highway One, North Brunswick, NJ
The second day of this interactive program, led by experts from the BioMentorz team, will cover issues important to partnering activities and ways to successfully gain visibility for your technology among big pharmaceutical companies.

Clinical Development Advisory Group for the Mercer County Community College Clinical Development
9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. | Mercer County College Conference Center

Moment of Hope
3 p.m. | Please celebrate within your organization.
Recognizing that Patients Can’t Wait, BioNJ will celebrate the innovation and collaboration within New Jersey’s life sciences industry by providing hope for patients around the world.

THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2015
A Day with Students2Science
9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. | 66 Deforest Avenue, East Hanover, NJ
The Life Sciences Talent Network is sponsoring a full-day program for students of East Hanover Middle School during which time they will work on real science experiments in fully functioning laboratories under the guidance of local industry professionals. Industry job seekers are welcome to contact Students2Science to volunteer for this and future programs.

BioHUB - Industry Networking Event
5:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. | La Quinta Inn 60 Cottontail Lane, Somerset, NJ
Professionals from across New Jersey will come together to network and share ideas for career development and job searching purposes. This is an excellent opportunity to form new industry relationships, re-connect with colleagues and have a new professional photo taken for your LinkedIn profile.
Plus, enter a drawing to win one-on-one coaching and a LinkedIn Profile Review with career expert, Abby Kohut.

FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 2015
The Secret Sauce to Getting Hired | FREE to industry job seekers. Space is limited.
9 a.m.-1 p.m. | Kean University STEM Building Auditorium, 1085 Morris Avenue, Union, NJ
Looking for that next career? Get Unstuck and Get Hired with LifeCollaborative’s special program. This four-hour interactive work-life-hack mini workshop is jam packed with immediate tools, techniques and approaches addressing key topics such as: updating your brand, revamping your resume, networking, skills hiring managers are looking for, and of course, the secret sauce! Priority registration will be given to job seekers and veterans seeking an exciting career in life sciences.

BioP on the Road to BIO
Time slots assigned based on availability | BioNJ Headquarters, 1255 Whitehorse Mercerville Road, Trenton
NJ BioNJ is offering early-stage life sciences companies a free opportunity to ramp up their presentation at partnering meetings, including the 2015 BIO International Convention coming in June. Open to current members and non-members of BioNJ. For information, contact Judy Applebaum at BioNJ Headquarters at JApplebaum@BioNJ.org to request an application to present.
The first 40 registrants to attend will receive a one-year enrollment in Life Collaborative eLibrary, a $395 value!

For more information and to register for these events, visit www.BioNJ.org.
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eaturing a wide variety of programs and networking events, New Jersey’s Life Sciences Week has something for everyone. Whether you are looking for a new career opportunity or searching for fresh talent within the life sciences industry, the connections you’ll make will last a lifetime.

“We are very excited for another productive Life Sciences Week,” said Matthew Alcalde, Director, Life Sciences Talent Network at BioNJ. “Each year, we hear wonderful success stories. Life Sciences Week is all about building the dynamic ecosystem of the Pharma and Biotech industry. There is such an amazing pool of highly-skilled talent in New Jersey.”

A staple of the week’s activities includes The Life Sciences Talent Network’s Annual Career Fair on Tuesday, April 21. The fair is designed to connect job-seekers within the life sciences field with employers, headhunters and other professional organizations. Innovative companies already signed up to exhibit include Amicus Therapeutics, Catalent Pharma Solutions, Genewiz, Kashiv Pharma, Publicis Touchpoint Solutions, Otsuka Pharmaceuticals, Novartis and more.

On Tuesday, April 21, and Wednesday, April 22, industry entrepreneurs will benefit from a two-day program, entitled Doing Deals, Funding & More Soup to Nuts, which will focus on how to effectively present pitches to VCs, create presentations, build a company-wide team, board management and other topics of importance to start-ups. This much-anticipated workshop will be presented by a team of experts from BioMentorz.

Join friends, colleagues and peers on Thursday, April 23, for BioHUB’s fun Networking Mixer. Come ready to form new industry relationships and reconnect with colleagues.

Life Sciences Week ends on Friday, April 24, at Kean University with The Secret Sauce to Getting Hired. This four-hour interactive, work-life-hack mini workshop is jam-packed with immediate tools, techniques and approaches addressing key topics such as: updating your personal brand, revamping your resume, what skills hiring managers are looking for, and of course, the secret sauce!

Check out BioNJ’s website, www.BioNJ.org, for more information on all of the activities planned for the week and join us as we celebrate this amazing industry.

That’s What New Jersey’s Life Sciences Week Is All About

Vicki Gaddy, Vice President, Talent Services, BioNJ
The Dollars: Saying nice things about New Jersey

Randi Bromberg, Vice President, Communications and Marketing, BioNJ

I f the adage is true that money talks, then the dollars are saying awfully nice things about New Jersey life sciences companies and their work developing drugs and therapies for battling disease and illness.

Consider that a single company working in the area of rare and neglected diseases – South Plainfield-based PTC Therapeutics – raised nearly half a billion dollars over the past two years, including an initial public offering in June 2013. “This has been a real hay day for biotech,” says PTC’s founder and CEO, Dr. Stuart Peltz, who is also the newly appointed Chairman of BioNJ. The Gateway to Health, the premiere advocacy and umbrella group for research-based life sciences companies in New Jersey. “These dollars are being put towards innovation.”

In Dr. Peltz’s case, innovation includes developing a medicine that fights Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD), a childhood muscle wasting disorder that shortens life spans by decades. PTC’s Translarna, recently approved in Europe, is the world’s first licensed treatment for DMD. PTC has the US launch in its sights, says Dr. Peltz, as his team enters the final months of its Phase III trial before finalizing its submission to the FDA later this year.

For Princeton-based Soligenix, a late-stage biopharmaceutical company, the war on terror has resulted in up to $57 million in federal biodefense contract awards, which includes the development of a vaccine against the toxin Ricin.

“The government contract funding not only allows us to advance the development of our biodefense programs, but it also allows us to extend the company’s cash runway,” says Soligenix President and CEO Dr. Christopher Schaber. “We still need to go out and raise money to fund the biotherapeutic side of our business, like oncology, but it allows us not to have to go out as often.”

Investors flocked to Agile Therapeutics last May, plunking down $55 million at the company’s initial stock offering and another $20 million in follow-on cash.

The specialty pharma company based in Princeton is in the final phase of clinical trials for a once-weekly, low dose contraceptive patch for women.

But while Agile Therapeutics CEO Al Altomari says he’s “bullish” on New Jersey’s life sciences industry, he says he still has concerns for small start-ups that don’t have drugs or therapeutics that are close to getting to market.

“Where I worry sometimes for the state and the bio community is the very early stage companies,” Altomari says. “Venture capitalists are under pressure to perform and they don’t have the time to wait for returns. They’re looking for the shorter bet, the quicker bet.”

That’s where State programs like the Technology Business Tax Certificate Transfer Program come in, he says. The State of New Jersey makes it possible for biotechnology companies to raise funds by selling their losses for cash through this program administered by the New Jersey Economic Development Authority.

Agile was awarded over $3 million through the program before its public offering last May and Altomari hints that the injection was a life saver. PTC Therapeutics was awarded approximately $5 million and Soligenix realized approximately $3 million by selling its losses for cash, since the company’s move from Florida to New Jersey in 2007.

“The Economic Development Authority money gave us a bridge to get to something else,” he says. “It literally was some of the last capital we took in before we went public. So I believe we need to keep programs like that one intact so we can help these young companies get off the ground. And we need more seed funding, more incubator space, more office space to help them.”

“I liken the (investor) dollars to fuel,” says Dr. Peltz of the wildly successful PTC. “You need fuel for your innovation engine, which powers the science, the clinical development and then the commercialization.”

As Schaber of Soligenix sees it, the ready availability of investment dollars ebbs and flows.

“You’ll have hot windows of opportunity and then not-so-hot, so it is important to be able to move quickly when the opportunity to bring in capital is there,” explains the CEO whose company’s work also includes two Phase 3, FDA orphan and fast-track designated clinical programs in pediatric Crohn’s Disease and cutaneous T-cell lymphoma. “In biotech drug development, it’s important not to get too high with the highs or too low with the lows. You try to be even-keeled and as strategic as possible with your resources.”

The seeds of Peltz’s company grew out of his scientific research into rare diseases as a professor at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Brunswick back in the 1990s.

Though it remains difficult for start-ups to succeed, he notes that his own company, not to mention the many other successful life sciences companies on the New Jersey landscape, is solid proof that it can and does happen.

“The mission that we built the company on in the late ‘90s is still true today,” Peltz noted. Going from a few brave pioneers to a company with more than 200 employees with global operations is something that Peltz chuckles at today.

“A nice aspect of this is that PTC is a New Jersey-born company,” Peltz adds, clearly pleased with the direction things are going for his company and for the biotech ecosystem he’s dedicated his life to.
There was a time not that long ago, when many professional search firms specializing in recruiting life sciences industry talent experienced what seemed like a slow trickle of work in the Garden State because a little thing that would come to be known as the Great Recession had cast its long shadow over the economic landscape.

“I can remember the day the phones stopped ringing; it was August 2008,” recalls Julie Kampf, CEO and President of JBK Associates International Inc., an Englewood-based executive search firm with a strong presence in the biotech field. “I was saying to my staff: ‘Why is it so quiet in here?’ But I think we all knew.”

Now those dark, quiet days are behind her. Today JBK’s phones are ringing off the hook with offers from biotech companies on the hunt for chief medical officers, chief science officers, chief marketing officers and more.

“The war for talent has only gotten greater,” says Kampf, invoking a catchphrase she’s developed and used in television interviews where she keys in on the wave of retiring baby boomers and the need to replace them in leadership roles in business.

“All boats are starting to rise,” echoes Gene Mancino, whose firm Mancino Burfield Edgerton specializes in executive search and advisory services for life sciences companies.

Mancino, Kampf and other recruiters active in New Jersey, however, add a caveat to their glad tidings noting that there has been a shift toward the development side of the equation. As the biotech industry has matured, there appear to be more job opportunities in the development work than ever before.

BIOTECH JOBS ARE TRENDING:
Opportunities abound in the New Jersey Biotech Sector
Matthew Alcade, Director, Life Sciences Talent Network, BioNJ
“New Jersey is very important in launching products and their commercialization,” says Kampf, noting that the life sciences companies based here are geared especially adept at getting products developed, approved and out to market.

In fact, New Jersey led the country last year in FDA approvals, the last step before the medicines, devices and therapeuticists are available to the public, says Michael Panagos, of Edison-based Joule Scientific Staffing Solutions, among the top 10 largest scientific staffing providers in the U.S.

“There is an accelerating demand for life science professionals in New Jersey,” adds Panagos.

And it’s not just in the C-Suite or senior-most levels of the organization where professionals are finding new opportunities becoming available.

Joule, which celebrates its 50th anniversary in business this June, finds professionals to fill biotech and other life sciences positions ranging from front-line scientists to lab techs.

“We have a diverse, robust and educated workforce in this state,” observes Panagos.

Recruiters say the mergers and acquisitions that have swept through big Pharma and led to a series of layoffs are counterbalanced in some cases by this growing demand in the hundreds of start-ups and emerging biotechs across New Jersey.

“The unemployment rate for college educated professionals and those with advanced degrees is under 5 percent,” says Kampf of JBK Associates. “That’s basically full employment, so great candidates have multiple opportunities.”

“But the successful candidate also needs to have a skill set that goes beyond technical expertise to satisfy the full range of what companies are looking for in the talent pool today,” says Cliff Miras, Co-founder and Managing Partner at the Parsippany-based life sciences executive search firm Cornerstone Search Group.

“More and more companies regardless of size are trying to employ and work with fewer people in the aggregate and better qualified people, too,” Miras says. “So beyond looking at qualifications like an M.D. with five years of experience in research, companies also want candidates to have good emotional intelligence and ‘soft skills’, such as the ability to lead, to negotiate, to listen, to empathize, to be politically astute.”

In return, Miras says, companies today are willing to be more flexible than they have in the past in terms of working arrangements.

“It used to be where you had to physically be there,” says Miras. “Now, because fewer industry professionals are willing to pick up and move with the frequency they did in the past, companies are willing to look past that and allow a variety of flexible work arrangements with partial or limited physical attendance. For example, one of our large clients has half a dozen locations throughout the world where they have clinical development going on and if they have an opening for a program being led in California, it’s not mandatory the talent they’re considering wants to live and work in California, they’re willing to let them live and work in one of their other global development locations (e.g. New Jersey, Massachusetts, Western Europe and others).”

The recruiters agree that the most sought after professionals are those involved with the clinical development and commercialization side of the industry in highly-specialized roles, such as Clinical Leads (Physicians), Regulatory Affairs, Market Access, Health Economics and Outcomes Research (HEOR), Medical Affairs, Program Management, Quality Control and others.

“There’s a big need for those positions,” says Kampf.

“The trends are positive,” says Mancino. “There are more opportunities with all of the start-ups and emerging companies we’re seeing.”
Are you connected to the resources you need?

When entrepreneurs find themselves with more questions than answers, they look for help. Choosing a business structure, raising money, tapping legal, valuation or tax advice, and sometimes just talking to someone who’s “been there.”

That’s where EisnerAmper fits in. Our passion is connecting entrepreneurs with the resources they need, when they need them, at every stage of the company’s life cycle.

Wherever you are on your entrepreneurial journey, make one of your first connections to EisnerAmper.

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