

Best and Brightest Forum on Medical Innovation

Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

December 15, 2008

On December 15, 2008, former Congressman Dick Gephardt facilitated a program that featured keynote speaker Governor Edward G. Rendell to discuss the future of medical innovation in the United States. The discussion focused, in particular, on the greater Philadelphia area in the context of the current economic downturn. In addition to the keynote, two expert panels highlighted obstacles to innovation as well as potential solutions. Panelists included:

- **Dennis M. “Mickey” Flynn**, President of Pennsylvania BIO
- **Glen N. Gaulton, PhD**, Executive Vice Dean, Chief Scientific Officer at The University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine
- **Brenda Gavin, DVM, MBA**, Founding Partner of Quaker BioVentures
- **Paul Howard, PhD**, Senior Fellow and Director of the Center for Medical Progress at the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research
- **Russel Kaufman, MD**, President and CEO of the Wistar Institute
- **Alan Leshner, PhD**, CEO of the American Association for the Advancement of Science
- **Joseph M. Mahady**, President of Wyeth Pharmaceuticals and Senior Vice President at Wyeth
- **Thomas Morr**, President and CEO of Select Greater Philadelphia
- **David B. Nash, MD, MBA**, Dean of the Jefferson School of Population Health at Thomas Jefferson University
- **Barbara S. Schilberg**, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of BioAdvance
- The Honorable **Joe Sestak (D-PA)**, U.S. House of Representatives
- **George Wohlreich, MD**, Director and CEO of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia

The Greater Philadelphia area is a hub for medical innovation activities, with a strong biotechnology sector and numerous academic institutions with nationally recognized programs in the life sciences. According to a 2005 Milken Institute study¹, the medical innovation industry in Greater Philadelphia encompasses 11.4 percent of all employment in the region, 12.8 percent of total earnings, and 7.1 percent of gross metro product.

Panelists drew attention to several key issues the region faces in capitalizing on these resources, with a focus on research and development, financing, and education. With respect to research and development, effective technology transfer and translational research will allow medical innovation to evolve along the continuum from basic science research to clinical care at the bedside. In order for this to occur, partnerships between academia and industry are essential. Funding challenges include aligning incentives for research and development, incentives for investigators to pursue basic science research, and defining the roles of public and private funding sources. Finally, panelists indicated that high quality education in the sciences must begin in elementary school and continue throughout higher education. Graduate programs in the sciences must be able to recruit young investigators and retain them following graduation.

The event was co-hosted by America's biopharmaceutical companies, Pennsylvania BIO, BioAdvance and Select Greater Philadelphia. ■

REFERENCES

1. Ross D, Koeppe R, Wallace L, et al. Milken Institute Research Report. The greater Philadelphia life science cluster: an economic and comparative assessment. http://www.selectgreaterphiladelphia.com/uploads/files/philadelphia_sciences_0605%5B1%5D.pdf. Published June 2005. Accessed February 18, 2009.