

Life Science Tennessee (LST) is the state's leading organization whose mission is to advance and grow the life science industry through advocacy, partnerships, and alignment with workforce development. From medical device companies to world renowned research institutions to exciting biotech startups, our members are essential to the health and economy of Tennessee. Moreover, the products and services we create improve the health and well-being of people throughout the world.

We have identified the following policy issues for the 114th General Assembly. We applaud the efforts of state legislators to expand economic opportunity and improve patient access to life-saving drugs and therapies.

- **Support Early-Stage Diagnostics:** We will work with legislators to improve and support efforts to help patients access treatment options concerning Newborn Screening, Rapid Whole Genome Sequencing, and understand the proven results of biomarker testing. SB1791/HB1973 (Newborn Screening) SB1762/HB1826 (rWGS)
- **Support Tennessee's Innovation Economy:** We ask legislators to continue to support funding for the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)/Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) matching program for \$12 million for FY25. The program exemplifies the impact of LaunchTN, which provides statewide resources to power Tennessee's innovation economy.
- **Support Non-Opioid Pain Relief:** We ask legislators to take additional steps to ensure that Tennessee providers and patients have treatment options available without the use of opioids. Support SB2011/HB2903.
- **Strengthen STEM Education:** Based on findings shared with legislators from Phase I of the STEM Assessment Report, we will work to address gaps and build a STEM workforce to meet growing industry demands.
- **Recognize the Value of Life Science Technologies:** We will focus on the value of our industry in developing life-saving drugs and therapies and contributing to Tennessee's economic growth. Support SB2008/HB2170
- **Stop the Spread of Infectious Disease:** We will continue to advocate for widespread vaccine adoption as vaccines remain the leading tool to stop the spread of infectious disease.
- **Join the Life Science Caucus:** We encourage legislators to join the bicameral, bipartisan caucus.

Support Early-Stage Diagnostics

Today, advanced technologies and therapies can deliver personalized approaches to treatment, cures, and disease prevention. A crucial step in this process is specialized diagnostic tools that help characterize diseases on a patient-by-patient basis.

Access to highly specialized diagnostics is the key to delivering better care for Tennesseans, allowing them to start treatment as soon as possible. Diagnosis during the earliest stages of a disease leads to improved survivorship rates, better quality of life, and, in many cases, lower overall healthcare costs. Life Science TN supports efforts to expand access to diagnostics for Tennessee patients, including for newly approved conditions for Tennessee newborns, rapid whole genome sequencing, and biomarker testing that improve patient outcomes and reduce healthcare costs. View our policy briefs to learn more information about the benefits of these diagnostics.

Support Non-Opioid Pain Relief

The General Assembly and TennCare should be commended for actions in recent years to combat the opioid and overdose crisis in Tennessee. Building on these successes, additional steps could be taken to ensure that Tennessee providers and residents have tools available for pain treatment without opioids. For example, current coverage and reimbursement policies incentivize the use of opioids as a first-line treatment. As more treatment options become available, we should ensure a level playing field for FDA-approved non-opioids. This includes ensuring priority access for non-opioids so that a physician's prescription cannot be denied in favor of an opioid,

updating reimbursement to allow coverage of non-opioids, and broadening education of non-opioid treatment options.

Support Tennessee's Innovation Economy with the SBIR/STTR Matching Program and LaunchTN Funding

Life Science Tennessee asks legislators to support the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)/Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) matching program that was first signed into law in 2016. Managed by Launch Tennessee, the matching program is a valuable tool that bolsters entrepreneurship in the state by matching federal dollars allotted to job-creating Tennessee companies. To date, program funding has created a **\$695** million economic impact on the state, totaling 939 jobs created since its inception. LST asks for the support of SBIR/STTR funding with \$12 million in the FY25 budget so that the state can continue to meet the needs of grant winners.

Strengthen STEM Education and Build a STEM Workforce

From biomedical lab technicians to nurses and physicians, we need a strong STEM workforce to meet growing demand. A recent report from BioTN, in partnership with LST, examined Tennessee's K-12 STEM education system and found that when Tennessee invests in STEM programs, such as the \$500 million Race to the Top, our students outperform their peers from other states. Average wages in STEM-related positions are \$95,000 a year—more than double the average for non-STEM jobs. Investing in Tennessee students' preparedness to enter these fields is a direct investment in the state's future economic prosperity. View the executive summary to learn more.

Recognize the Importance and Value of Medicine

Life Science Tennessee asks state lawmakers to oppose any legislation that would inhibit research and development of life-saving drugs and therapies as well as access to care. These innovations limit the growth of health care costs overall by effectively treating patients and keeping them out of hospitals, while providing high-paying jobs to Tennesseans. We ask that you oppose legislation that would impede the ability to innovate new cures for patients.

New tactics implemented by insurers, PBMs, and third-party vendors to exploit patient assistance threaten to make it harder or even impossible for patients to get important treatments for chronic illnesses such as asthma, diabetes, HIV, arthritis, hemophilia, and others. HB 2170/SB 2008 would close policy loopholes that allow alternative funding programs (AFPs) to get in the way of patients and their medicines and protect patients' access to their medicines.

Stop the Spread of Infectious Disease

Vaccines support our immune system's complex and robust defense mechanisms by preemptively giving the body the tools it needs to fight germs, bacteria, or viruses. The vast majority of Tennessee's families are immunized and support strong public health laws. Ensure all families and communities have access to vaccines—and have confidence in taking them. We ask all legislators to work to build trust in vaccines and to support the widespread adoption and dissemination of vital vaccines for numerous infectious diseases.

Join the Life Science Caucus

The mission of the Life Science Caucus is to make Tennessee an innovator in life-saving drugs and therapies that will help everyday Tennesseans live healthier, fuller lives. To date, the caucus has hosted a fact-finding mission to the HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology in Huntsville, AL, and tours of Pfizer's distribution center in Memphis, the Center for Medical Interoperability in Nashville, CrossRoads Extemity Systems in Memphis, and CSL's world testing site for plasma in Knoxville. We have also held several virtual events on vaccine education and biomarkers. We encourage legislators to join the Tennessee General Assembly Life Science Caucus chaired by Sen. Reeves and Rep. White.

For more information, contact Abby Trotter, Executive Director, at 615-242-8856 or atrotter@lifesciencetn.org