

# THE PULSE

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This newsletter is guaranteed to put a spring in your step. And despite some spring showers that are dampening the industry, there are also green shoots of growth and opportunity. Read, react, and share the latest from the Southwest PA life sciences ecosystem and beyond.

## Life Sciences Future SW - Year 1

On April 23rd and 24th we collaborated with community partners to host a series of events, culminating in the first Life Sciences Futures SW conference, co-hosted with Life Sciences PA.

**300+** life sciences entrepreneurs, researchers, investors, and stakeholders convened over two days of events to build new partnerships, make connections inside and outside the region, share intel, and build the network strength of the ecosystem.

**14+** entrepreneurs pitched their companies, including medical devices, therapeutics, and digital health solutions across the two days.

**15+** venture capital investors, brought together by LifeX, UPMC Enterprises, and Innovation Works, visited from across the country.

Life Sciences Future Southwest may be over, but the partnerships, coalitions, and new ideas coming out of it are just getting started.



PLSA President and CEO Megan Shaw, **PA DCED** Deputy Secretary of Technology and Entrepreneurship Jenn Gilburg, **Life Sciences PA** President and CEO Chris Molineaux, and SVP at **Wexford Sciences and Technology**



Thermo Fisher Scientific VP of Cell and Gene Therapy Betty Woo, moderates a panel with **Noveome Biotherapeutics** CEO Eric Keller, **Krystal Biotech** CEO Krish Krishnan, and **ElevateBio** SVP, Global Health of Government

## Thanks again to our sponsors



## Federal changes and your business

[Take the 5 minute survey](#)

Elected officials, policy makers, media outlets, and economic development organizations have been asking us how the changes in federal funding, staffing, and policy is impacting the local life sciences sector.

Hearing directly from you - the business leaders and entrepreneurs - is critical to providing accurate, on-the-ground feedback. If you are leading a life sciences company, please take the survey linked above. We need to hear from you!

## PA Legislative Education and Engagement



The **PA Senate Majority Policy Committee** invited PLSA President and CEO Megan Shaw to discuss ways to advance life sciences in PA. She was joined by **PECA Labs** Co-Founder and COO Jamie Quintero and **TellingAI** Co-founder and CTO Satya Venneti. Venneti shared,

"Telling AI exists today thanks to the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program, critical in turning innovative healthcare ideas into commercial solutions—particularly benefiting rural communities."

Shaw also testified at the **House Majority Policy Committee** alongside **Kalivir Immunotherapeutics** Co-Founder and CSO Steve Thorne.

Dr. Thorne provided a critical case study on the benefits and challenges of growing a life sciences company in the region.

"As we look to continue to grow the company in the future we could potentially increase this local workforce by over 10-fold, especially through the building of larger scale manufacturing facilities for commercial production."

PLSA Vice President of External Affairs Austin Price joined a contingent of life sciences companies from across the commonwealth at the LSPA Advocacy Days to build bi-partisan, bicameral support for the sector.

Continued education for lawmakers on the current breadth and depth of expertise and employment in the region and the opportunities for growth are critical to making PA a more competitive market for life sciences companies to start, grow, and join.

## CEOs Talk Macro Market Trends with JPM

PLSA's first pop-up networking event allowed local c-suite professionals spanning healthcare, life sciences, and finance to learn, network, and strategize for what's ahead in a quickly-shifting macroeconomic and sector specific backdrop.

Lauren Ruane, Managing Director and Head of Healthcare Services, Middle Market, Commercial Bank at J.P. Morgan, shared her perspectives on factors influencing the sector and how to navigate the uncertainty with a particular focus on raising capital for companies at all stages.



## Key Ecosystem News



**Magee-Womens Research** Institute hosted a tour the day before the conference and shared how their work changes the way the world treats women.



Clayton Hall, VP of Government affairs at the **Medical Device Manufacturers Association** shared perspective on how federal changes are impacting the sector.

## **Noveome's \$51M funding boost propels clinical trials to treat rare pediatric disease**

Lead candidate ST266 has been rare pediatric disease designation and orphan drug designation from the FDA. The series E raise will fund clinical trials and Pittsburgh-based biomanufacturing capabilities.

## **Pitt Partners with Global AI and Multiomics Firms to Transform Health Care**

Pitt and Vizzy will launch GAINMED, an AI-powered health care platform delivering P5 Medicine —predictive, preventive, personalized, precision and participatory care. A further component of this initiative is the establishment of the Pitt-Vizzy Longevity Labs, in partnership with Illumina Inc., providing multiomics laboratory services to expand precision medicine across the United States and globally.

## **Pitt gets \$10 million to expand artificial intelligence in medicine**

The University of Pittsburgh and Leidos revealed a \$10M, 5 year partnership through Pitt's Computational Pathology and AI Center of Excellence.

## **Curi Bio and Cook MyoSite Announce Strategic Partnership**

The strategic scientific collaboration aims to develop advanced, predictive human engineered tissue models aimed at addressing muscle-related diseases and metabolic disorders, including obesity and diabetes.

## **Spurring Innovation: Shapiro Administration invests \$2 million to support early-stage life science tech companies in Pennsylvania**

Neovate was awarded \$2M through the Ben Franklin Technology Development Authority to make investments in med-tech and biopharma, in support of PA's 10 year economic development strategy.

## **Collier's 2025 US Life Sciences Report**

In Collier's annual report on the domestic sector, Collier's highlights Pittsburgh as a top emerging cluster.

## **Inside Healthcare's Hottest New AI Category: Agentic AI**

Med City News spoke with UPMC Enterprises about their approach to AI development and deployment in the health system and their new Ahavi platform.

## **Biotech officials predict better times for the industry - after a 'nuclear winter' for science**

The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette covered key insights from policy experts and local life sciences CEOs at Life Sciences Future SW.

## **Pittsburgh biotech firms benefit in potential pharma tariffs and domestic manufacturing**

The Pittsburgh Business Times covered how companies with local biomanufacturing capabilities, are seeing the current federal landscape as discussed at Life Sciences Future SW.

## National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology Urges Swift Action to Protect U.S. National Security

The congressionally chartered commission delivered its major report and action plan urging urgent action to bring the full weight of American innovation to bear on the biotechnology challenge for economic growth, human health, and national security.

## Fast Company: Abridge in top 10 most innovative companies in the world

Fast Company released its list of "The World's 50 Most Innovative Companies of 2025" and local AI in clinical conversations company Abridge came in at #7.

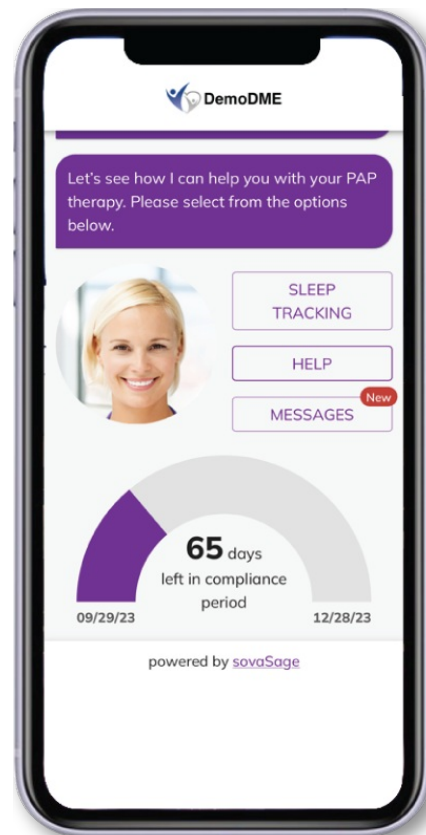
# Startup Spotlight



sovaSage was founded in 2019 by CEO William Kaigler and CTO Christian Kebekus. William and Christian are serial entrepreneurs who have been involved in previous successful exits both together and independently.

sovaSage is revolutionizing the sleep apnea industry with technology that is both powerful and easy to use. Their computer vision and machine learning technologies fuel solutions for sleep labs, durable medical equipment providers, and e-commerce organizations.

*"We use the sovaSage's TherapistAssist Jeanie™ Compliance Management service to optimize our long term patient compliance and streamline our process – from patient set up through long term therapeutic management. Their technology is cutting edge, our patient's like it and their team of clinicians do an excellent job with our patients. The integration of AI based mask fitting, with the only digital sleep coach capability is a truly unique solution."*  
- Customer testimonial



sovaSage's TherapistAssist Jeanie™ is the future of compliance management for sleep apnea.

# Employer Spotlight

- Biotech/Regenerative medicine
- Headquartered in Pittsburgh, PA
- Founded in 2016
- KRYS (NYSE)

Krystal Biotech's "*mission is to develop and deliver genetic medicines to patients using redosable gene therapies for the treatment of severe, life-threatening or rare diseases that have limited or no approved therapies.*"

The commercial-stage company was launched in 2016 by biotech power couple of the decade, Krish Krishnan, current chairman and CEO, and Suma Krishnan, president of research and development. Mr. Krishnan is a seasoned biotech executive who was previously involved in successful IPOs of New River Pharmaceuticals, Inc (NASDAQ: NRPH) and Intrexon Corporation (NYSE: XON). Mrs. Krishnan has 25 years of drug development experience, leading the discovery, development, and approval of blockbuster drugs like Vyvanse and Adderall XR, both to treat ADHD.

**Krystal made news with a major global scientific milestone in 2023** when they gained FDA approval for the first redosable gene therapy with VYJUVEK for the treatment of Dystrophic Epidermolysis Bullosa, a rare and severe genetic skin disorder. Based on the success of VYJUVEK and their promising pipeline in dermatology, respiratory, oncology, ophthalmology, and aesthetic dermatology, their market cap has rapidly climbed to over \$4.7B.

At the first ever Life Sciences Future SW, Krish Krishnan eloquently simplified the company's approach. "Fundamentally, if you think about what Krystal does, we develop medicines for patients who have a genetic disease. A disease caused by a gene that is either missing or mutated in a patient. So we find ways to deliver a clean copy of the gene to the patient in a safe, effective manner. And once you provide a copy of the healthy gene, functionality is restored. And that is the principle across every disease we bring to market."

Their investment in their own biomanufacturing capabilities and facilities in the region is another important source of differentiation and vertical integration, as well as example of the region's expanding prowess in the manufacturing of Next-Gen therapeutics.

Krystal is currently hiring for several positions at an exciting time to join the company.

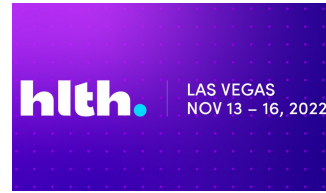
[Find your next opportunity.](#)

## Pittsburgh on the Road

We are working with life sciences leaders, community partners, academic institutions, and health systems to engage potential industry partners and investors outside the region at premier events.

**Are you going to any of the events listed below? We want to hear from you.**

With support and collaboration from the Allegheny Conference.



The Future of Healthcare:  
Bridging the Gap Between  
Cell & Gene Therapy  
Innovation and Accessibility

Weds, May 14th  
6:00 - 8:00 PM  
New Orleans Warehouse  
District

Featuring **Kalivir**, **ElevateBio**,  
and **AskBio**.

**Reception Registration**

Leveraging AI, Preclinical  
Models, & Clinical Insights

This invite-only event hosted  
by the University of  
Pittsburgh will showcase Pitt's  
potential as a strategic  
industry partner. They bring  
the best of:

- AI in drug discovery
- Novel preclinical models
- Clinical insights and biospecimens

Drawing 12,000+ attendings  
including nearly 3,000 CEOs,  
HLTH is the premier health  
innovation event.

This event will showcase the  
region's dynamic talent and  
capabilities in AI and digital  
health to investors, health  
systems, and potential  
industry partners across the  
country.



The best way to stay on top of news and updates from PLSA,  
as well as the organizations in our ecosystem, is by  
following us on LinkedIn. Don't miss out!



We are always looking for your input! If you have suggestions for newsletter content or spotlights, please contact Austin Price at [aprice@pittsburghlifesci.org](mailto:aprice@pittsburghlifesci.org).

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