

June 23, 2022

The Honorable Xavier Becerra  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra:

As members of the Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia, its regional CEO Council for Growth (CEO Council), and southeastern Pennsylvania's elected leaders, we commend you and the Administration for recognizing America's preeminence in biomedical research and technology. With the establishment of the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H), our nation has the enhanced ability to accelerate the development of therapies and treatments that can drive massive breakthroughs in health care.

Our region's business, civic, and elected leaders are united in their commitment to solidify our eleven-county, tri-state area as a global first tier 21st century innovation economy. Greater Philadelphia's collective leadership seeks to leverage the region's specialized strengths in several of the fastest growing subsectors of the health care and life sciences industry, particularly the cell & gene therapy and gene editing subsectors. We feel that Greater Philadelphia's position as a global hub of research, talent, capital, and companies, combined with its second-to-none accessibility, give this region the power to forever transform how health care is delivered to patients and essentially cure the incurable.

Ranked among the **top eight life sciences markets** in the U.S., Greater Philadelphia has a **deep scientific and medical history**. We are home to **world-class research institutions**, inventors of breakthrough medical treatments and technology, and 15 major health systems. Biopharmaceutical leaders, including AstraZeneca, Bristol Myers Squibb, GSK, Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer and Merck, are among the more than 1,800 life sciences companies in Greater Philadelphia that employ more than 70,000 people. It's no surprise that our tri-state area is a **national leader in clinical trials**, that we are pioneering cell and gene therapies, and that medical marvels are routinely taking place here.

The Greater Philadelphia region is recognized worldwide as a leader in cell therapy, gene therapy, and gene editing. In 2020, an analysis by Econsult Solutions placed Greater Philadelphia in the **top three in the country**. This is also where the field started two decades ago and where it continues to rapidly grow. Our region's commitment to research and development excellence and a deep and diverse talent pool led to the first FDA-approved cell therapy and the first FDA-approved gene therapy.

Today, the Greater Philadelphia region is home to nearly 50 of these pioneering cell and gene therapy research and development companies, countless research labs, and a growing community of contract research organizations as well as other supporting firms. Institutions including the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Coriell Institute, ChristianaCare's Gene Editing Institute, Drexel University, Jefferson Health, Temple University, and the Wistar Institute contribute to the steady stream of scientific discoveries and technical expertise that underpin these emerging and scaling companies and significant research breakthroughs like the mRNA technology which serves as the foundation for both the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines. The subsector also benefits from a robust talent pipeline, with nearly 10,000 workers holding specific expertise in cell and gene therapy.

Our area serves as a global gateway accessible by air, sea, road, and both freight and inter-city passenger rail. Located directly adjacent to I-95 and only minutes from our major innovation hubs, Philadelphia International Airport (PHL) is easily accessible to our community, connects to more than 140 destinations worldwide and is already attracting life sciences companies that need proximity to an airport to move people and cargo – as critical as living cells - to the lab, patient, or destination in a prompt and timely manner. PHL has recognized the impact of the life sciences industry in our region and is currently expanding its capacity with the development of 137 acres dedicated to cargo infrastructure, logistics, and cold storage capacity. This move builds upon American Airlines already 25,000 square-foot facility, its largest cold storage facility, dedicated specifically to pharmaceutical use.

For all of these reasons and many more, we believe Greater Philadelphia is well-positioned to serve as the ideal physical location for ARPA-H. We are confident ARPA-H would thrive in our ecosystem's abundance of world-class biomedical research institutions, accessible top-notch and diverse talent, and available infrastructure and real estate. We are committed to helping you achieve the ARPA-H vision in Greater Philadelphia, a region that is connected, collaborative, and accessible to the world.

We would welcome the opportunity to host you in Greater Philadelphia to provide a demonstration of our vibrant ecosystem and all that it has to offer.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

**Aileen Alexander**  
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Senior Partner & Managing Director  
**Boston Consulting Group**

**Jason Wingard**  
President  
**Temple University**

**Rob Wonderling**  
President & CEO  
**The Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia**

CC : Admiral Rachel L. Levine, MD, Asst. Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Ala Stanford, MD, Regional Director, Region 3, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services