



**For Immediate Release**  
January 5, 2021

**Contacts:**  
Kristin O'Keefe  
VP of Communications & Marketing  
240-641-6703  
[kristin@thinkmoco.com](mailto:kristin@thinkmoco.com)

## **Montgomery County, MD Biotech Companies Secured Nearly \$8 Billion in 2020 Funding for COVID-19 and Other Life-Saving Vaccines, Therapeutics and Advances**

### ***Investments Underscore Local Leadership in Global Bio Innovation***

**Rockville, Md.** — While 2020 was most notable for the worldwide pandemic, several Montgomery County, Maryland life sciences companies have played a critical and major role in the development of lifesaving COVID-19 vaccines and treatments that will impact public health and the economic recovery of our local and global community in 2021.

From lupus to Parkinson's disease, Montgomery County companies are also fighting multiple diseases and saving lives through unparalleled vaccine research, cell and gene therapies and manufacturing capabilities. Local life sciences companies span the gamut from early- and mid-stage to late-stage therapeutics to earn Montgomery County the title of "The Immunology Capital Next to the Nation's Capital."

"We're proud that Montgomery County's renowned life sciences companies are helping to develop life-saving vaccines and treatments – their work will help us fully reopen all of our businesses and they are key to a future thriving economy," said Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich.

Since the start of 2020, almost \$8 Billion in federal, private and foundational funding has been invested in life sciences companies with a Montgomery County presence for coronavirus vaccine research and other immunotherapeutic developments. Novavax and Emergent BioSolutions were among the first recipients of federal Operation Warp Speed funding of more than \$5.5 Billion to fight COVID-19. An additional \$2 Billion in equity and venture capital funding was also invested in Montgomery County companies.

"This year's growth highlights our position as a global life sciences hub and shows why companies are looking to expand their operations in Montgomery County," said County Council President Tom Hucker. "There is real value in locating here next to the nation's capital with nearby access to 18 federal agency headquarters, three major airports and the nation-leading diversity that characterizes our county."

"The significant investments made in Montgomery County over the last year are a recognition of the urgent life sciences needs that are being met through our many local assets," said Benjamin H. Wu, MCEDC President and CEO. "Companies from around the world are attracted to our highly educated workforce and proximity to NIH, the world's largest federal researcher, and the FDA, the world's largest federal regulator. The many accomplishments of our biotech companies make clear that Montgomery County is an immunology capital and a vaccine leader."

Other important Montgomery County assets include easy access to nearby leading trade associations and top bio talent. MD's 8th Congressional district leads the nation in the proportion of science and engineering jobs to total workforce. A national report by [ITI](#) also found the 8th district's 52,000 STEM workers are triple the national median.

###

## 2020 Highlights of Montgomery County Life Science Accomplishments

<b>January</b>	<p><b>Novavax</b> announces development of its coronavirus vaccine candidate, NVX-CoV2373. It is the start of a very big year for this Gaithersburg biotech company.</p> <p>Gaithersburg's <b>Adaptive Phage Therapeutics</b> receives a \$10.2 million contract with the Department of Defense to advance its PhageBank to fight superbugs.</p> <p>Rockville-based <b>Integrated BioTherapeutics</b> raises \$3.9 M in the same month to develop toxin-based vaccines to help control infectious diseases.</p>
<b>February</b>	<p>Silver Spring-based <b>United Therapeutics</b> announces FDA clearance for Remodulin to treat pulmonary arterial hypertension. The company is dedicated to both science and the planet—its Unisphere is one of the largest net-zero energy commercial buildings in the U.S.</p>
<b>March</b>	<p><b>Novavax</b> is back in the news, announcing its collaboration with Gaithersburg's <b>Emergent BioSolutions</b> for early-stage human research on its coronavirus vaccine candidate.</p> <p><b>Aurinia Pharmaceuticals Inc.</b>, a Canadian-based, late-stage clinical biopharma company, releases its plans to establish its U.S. commercial operations in Rockville.</p> <p><i>"We are thrilled to announce the opening of our U.S. commercial offices in Rockville, Maryland, as we continue to develop voclosporin, which has the potential to become the first-ever approved treatment for patients suffering from lupus nephritis...the state's commitment to attracting and supporting leading innovators played a key role in our decision to establish Aurinia's U.S. presence here."</i></p> <p><b>Peter Greenleaf, President and CEO, Aurinia</b></p> <p>Germantown's <b>Amarex</b>, a contract research organization, begins work with a current client to repurpose an HIV therapy for COVID-19. Amarex goes on to help 16 companies with 32 separate projects for COVID-19 including devices, therapies and vaccines.</p>
<b>April</b>	<p>Bethesda-based <b>National Institutes of Health</b> announces its plan to partner with 16 drug companies to accelerate COVID-19 treatments and vaccines. See more 2020 NIH news and collaborations <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Also in April, <b>Sanaria</b> and <b>Protein Potential</b>, co-located in Rockville, announce the development of a COVID-19 antibody test in collaboration with the University of Maryland, Baltimore and the University of Tübingen in Germany.</p>
<b>May</b>	<p>Global <b>GlaxoSmithKline</b> (GSK) announces its plans to produce one billion doses of pandemic vaccine adjuvant in 2021 to support multiple COVID-19 vaccine collaborations. GSK's Moncef Slaoui Global Center for Vaccine Research is in Rockville.</p> <p><b>Teralimmune</b>, an immune-cell therapy company, receives a MOVE grant for its move to Rockville.</p> <p>Gaithersburg's <b>Maxcyte Biosciences</b> licenses its Flow Electroporation® technology and ExPERT platform to a California company developing CRISPR gene-edited, allogeneic T cell therapies.</p>
<b>June</b>	<p>A clinical-stage biopharma in Gaithersburg, <b>Arcellx</b>, presents preclinical data demonstrating its therapeutic to target blood cell cancers including acute myelogenous leukemia.</p> <p>Gaithersburg's <b>Viela Bio</b> announces U.S. FDA approval of UPLIZNA™ for the Treatment of Neuromyelitis Optica Spectrum Disorder, which can cause blindness or paralysis.</p>
<b>July</b>	<p><b>Novavax</b> announces it will receive \$1.6 billion from the federal Operation Warp Speed program, one of the largest federal awards granted, to expedite development of its coronavirus vaccine. Novavax also receives \$388 Million from the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations and \$60 Million through a Department of Defense contract.</p> <p><i>"The Covid-19 pandemic highlights the need for industry, government and funding entities to join forces to defeat this and other public health threats. We feel fortunate to be in resource-rich Montgomery County as we continue the important work of developing a vaccine to defeat Covid-19 and other serious threats to public health."</i></p> <p><b>Stanley C. Erck, President and Chief Executive Officer, Novavax</b></p> <p>In more partnership news, Gaithersburg's <b>Altimune</b> announces a manufacturing collaboration with Rockville's <b>Vigene Biosciences</b> for a single dose intranasal vaccine candidate for COVID-19.</p>

- July (Cont'd)** Bethesda's **Gain Therapeutics, Inc.**, a biotech company developing medicines to treat rare genetic and CNS diseases, raises \$10 million in a Series B financing with institutional and accredited investors.
- Gaithersburg's **Emergent BioSolutions** signs a \$174 million deal with **AstraZeneca**, agreeing to scale up manufacturing for the British and Gaithersburg pharma giant's COVID-19 vaccine candidate.
- Altimmune** closes \$132 million public offering.
- August** **AstraZeneca** (AZ) in Gaithersburg begins a clinical trial of its monoclonal antibody combination drug for the prevention and treatment of SARS-CoV-2 infections. Two months later, AZ receives a \$60 million contract to produce the drug for the U.S. Army.
- Gaithersburg's **Cartesian Therapeutics** initiates clinical trials of the first RNA-engineered cell therapy for acute respiratory distress syndrome and COVID-19.
- September** Japan's **Nobelpharma America, LLC** chooses Bethesda for its first overseas subsidiary. The company develops curative drugs and medical devices for diseases like tuberous sclerosis complex that often go overlooked due to a small number of patients.
- "We chose Bethesda, Maryland as Nobelpharma's U.S. headquarters because of the proximity to the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration and advocacy organizations... access to the country's leading researchers, regulators and advocates is a key element of our success strategy, and we are glad to make Montgomery County, Maryland our new U.S. home."*
- Yoshiki Kida, President & CEO, Nobelpharma**
- Testing company **PMCDx**, located in the Germantown Innovation Center on the campus of Montgomery College's [PIC-MC](#), pivots to COVID-19 testing with a 24-hour turnaround.
- October** **Autonomous Therapeutics, Inc.** (ATI), a rapidly growing antivirals company, chooses Rockville for its new headquarters, relocating from New York City. ATI is developing a suite of "Therapeutic Interfering Particles" to prevent respiratory pandemics, including influenza and COVID-19.
- The **Food and Drug Administration**, located in Silver Spring, gives Emergency Use Authorization for the antiviral drug Remdesivir for the treatment of COVID-19 patients requiring hospitalization. See more 2020 news from the FDA [here](#).
- REGENXBIO** of Rockville announces that it will receive a milestone payment of \$80 million from Novartis AG based upon the achievement of \$1 billion in cumulative net sales of Zolgensma. Zolgensma, a one-time gene therapy for the treatment of pediatric patients with SMA, was developed using REGENXBIO's technology.
- NIH** intramural researcher Dr. Harvey Alter wins 2020 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.
- FDA** grants **GlycoMimetics** rare pediatric disease designation for Rivipansel for treatment of Sickle Cell disease.
- China-based precision oncology company **Genetron Health Inc.** relocates its U.S. headquarters to Montgomery County from North Carolina's Research Triangle. It receives critical Breakthrough Device designation by the FDA for its detection of liver cancer.
- November** Merck strikes a deal to buy Rockville-based **Oncolmmune** and its COVID-19 treatment candidate in a \$425 million cash acquisition.
- Novavax** announces plans for major expansion into a 122,000 SF R&D, manufacturing and office facility.
- Rockville's **American Gene Technologies** enrolls its first participant in its Phase 1 trial for its new cell and gene therapy for HIV disease.
- December** **Macrogenics** scores its first FDA approval with breast cancer medicine Margenza.
- Global life science leader **QIAGEN** releases plans to expand its current headquarters, R&D and manufacturing facility in Germantown to expand production for its testing products for COVID-19 and other diseases.
- Gain Therapeutics** partners with the University of Maryland's School of Medicine to investigate Gain's candidates to fight Gaucher and Parkinson's diseases.

**Life Sciences companies that work in the immunology space can learn more about Montgomery County and our many assets [here](#). We look forward to continued growth and welcoming new companies in 2021 and beyond.**

**About MCEDC**

The Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC) is the official public-private economic development organization representing Montgomery County, Maryland. Created in 2016, MCEDC is led by a Board of Directors of business executives. Its mission is to help businesses start, grow and relocate in Montgomery County by helping them gain access to top talent, business and market intelligence and prime locations. For more information, visit our website. Follow us on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.