

Group calls for \$200M Hub center for new medicines

By Christine McConville | Monday, February 25, 2008 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | Business & Markets

Building a world-class center for new medicines right here in Massachusetts would cement the region's role as a leader in the increasingly sophisticated life sciences industry, according to a report released today by the public policy consulting group Mass Insight Corp.

The group is calling on state leaders to tap local and federal funds to create a \$200 million translational medicine center, where scientists from a variety of disciplines would work together to fight diseases.

The call for a so-called translational medicine center comes as the scientific community embraces the notion that diseases are caused by a combination of factors, including genetics. While traditional medicine uses a one-size-fits-all approach to treatment, translational medicine endorses more individualized care.

For example, instead of using a formulaic chemotherapy treatment to eradicate cancer cells from a person's body, a physician who practices translational medicine would custom-develop a treatment program by "translating" the latest laboratory findings into patient care.

Mass Insight President William Guenther said building a cutting-edge facility "is the heart of our strategy to sustain our national and global leadership.

"But that will happen only through the right investment and expanded collaboration," he said.

The group's report surfaces as state leaders promote a plan to invest \$1 billion over a 10-year period in order to maintain the state's leading edge in the life sciences industry.

The civic group is hoping that some of that money will be funneled toward the proposed center.

Another possible funding source may be the National Institutes of Health, which has called translational medicine a priority.

Supporters say Massachusetts - with its particular blend of industry, academia, teaching hospitals and government - is exceptionally well positioned for such a center.

"No other region possesses the same blend of top talent, university research capacity and industry and venture capital investment," Jeff Elton, chief operating officer of Novartis, said in a written statement.

But some warn that because other regions are eager to build their own world-class life sciences hubs, Massachusetts must continually invest in the industry to stay competitive.

Dana Farber CEO Ed Benz said, in a written statement, that the proposed medical center "is central to a global talent strategy that can recruit and retain the top researchers from Massachusetts and the world."

Both Elton and Benz are serving on a working group that plans to release a more detailed proposal for the center later this year.

Guenther, meanwhile, is hoping that the report sparks debate about what it means to be a new medicine capital.

"That should guide you on where to invest," he said.

Article URL: <http://www.bostonherald.com/business/general/view.bg?articleid=1075734>

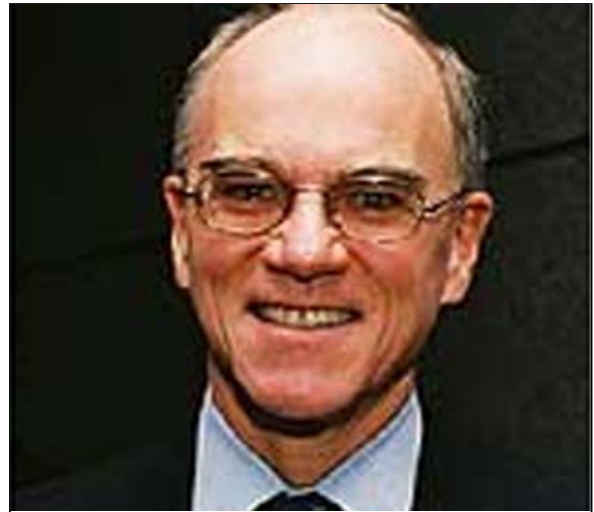


Photo by (file)



[Contact us](#) | [Print advertising](#) | [Online advertising](#) | [Herald history](#) | [News tips](#) | [Electronic edition](#) | [Browser upgrade](#) | [Home delivery](#) | [Herald wireless](#)

Save on Boston Herald Home Delivery

For back copy information and more information on other collectible copies please call 617-426-3000 Ext. 7714. [Click here for Patriots and Red Sox back copies](#)



© Copyright by the Boston Herald and Herald Media.
No portion of BostonHerald.com or its content may be reproduced without the owner's written permission. [Privacy Commitment](#)