LSAB MARYLAND
LIFE SCIENCES ADVISORY BOARD

Tuesday, July 28, 2026
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
City Garage
101 West Dickman Street
Baltimore, MD 21230

Meeting Minutes

Welcome and Introductions
Dr. Perman called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and carried out a roll call to confirm attendance.

Board Members in Attendance
Jay Perman, MD – Chancellor, University System of Maryland [Chair]
Rich Bendis – President, CEO and Co-founder, BioHealth Innovation
Nawal Benmouna, PhD – Vice President of STEM and Health Sciences, Montgomery College
Jesse Christopher – CEO, Longeviti Neuro Solutions
Harry Coker, Jr. – Secretary, Maryland Department of Commerce
Renee Iacona, PhD – Vice President, AstraZeneca
Edward E. C. Margerrison, PhD – Director of the Office of Science and Engineering Laboratories, Center for Devices and Radiological Health, Food and Drug Administration
Mark Mortenson, JD – Chief Scientific Officer, Clene Nanomedicine
Bob Storey – Principal, The MVR Company; Managing Director, The LaunchPort [Vice Chair]
Matthew Tremblay, PhD – CEO, Blackbird Laboratories
Ellington West – CEO, Sonavi Labs

Department of Commerce Attendees
Ricardo Benn – Deputy Secretary, Industry, International and Innovation
John Gilstrap – Assistant Secretary, Industry, International and Innovation
Ulyana Desiderio, PhD – Senior Director, Strategic Industries
Stefanie Trop, PhD – Director, Life Sciences
Bradley Gillenwater – Manager, Life Sciences

General Public Attendees
Stephanie Brandford – Brayearst Validation Consulting
Chris Frew – Founder, BioBuzz; CEO, Workforce Genetics
Brian Iglehart – Unaffiliated
Sam Hopkins – Senior Advisor, Mind Over Machines
Michele Masucci, PhD – Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development, University System of Maryland
Drew Moore – Senior Project Manager, JLL
Chinenye Ofor – Student Lead Ambassador, Towson University

Dr. Perman reminded everyone about the Board charge to maintain Maryland's preeminence in the life sciences by promoting life sciences research, development, commercialization, and manufacturing; strengthening collaboration and coordination among industry, higher education, and federal facilities; and coordinating state and federal resources to attract private-sector investment and job creation.

Dr. Perman acknowledged long-time board member Christy Wyskiel, who conveyed her wish to rotate off the board, thanking her for her years of dedicated service.

Mr. Storey and Dr. Tremblay introduced City Garage, detailing its history as a former city maintenance facility for buses and police vehicles turned innovation hub by Sagamore Development. The 35,000-square-foot facility features 20,000 square feet of FDA-regulated manufacturing space and houses LaunchPort, Blackbird Laboratories, and Haystack Oncology. Companies operating out of the site have raised over $300 million in private capital and employ several hundred people. Dr. Tremblay highlighted Blackbird Laboratories' $12 million facility build-out, supported by a $2 million Build Our Future grant under a ten-year lease.

Review and Acceptance of Meeting Minutes
Dr. Perman asked for feedback on the draft minutes of the May 8, 2026, LSAB meeting. Receiving none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes, which was made by Mr. Mortenson and seconded by Rich Bendis. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Opportunity Zone Expiration
Dr. Tremblay presented on upcoming changes to federal Opportunity Zone (OZ) designations impacting the City Garage location at the end of the calendar year. Under the Maryland Biotechnology Investment Incentive Tax Credit (BIITC), investments in Qualified Maryland Biotechnology Companies (QMBCs) located within an Opportunity Zone qualify for an enhanced rebate of 65% to 75%, compared to the baseline 33% rebate. The pending expiration creates financial pressure for early-stage startups to relocate outside established infrastructure clusters.

Deputy Secretary Benn noted that federal OZ designations were intended as temporary catalysts to achieve market-driven success. Board members discussed potential legislative remedies, including decoupling BIITC enhanced rates from federal OZ designations, creating state life science zones, or adjusting QMBC baseline tax credit allocations. An ad-hoc group including Dr. Tremblay and Mr. Storey will draft a formal recommendation for Commerce ahead of the August 28 agency feedback deadline.

Maryland BioCatalyst Program
Mr. Frew and Ms. Ofor presented on the Maryland BioCatalyst Program, a pilot initiative supported by the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO) and employer partners to inspire diverse academic talent across science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), business, and communications to pursue life science careers in Maryland. Ms. Ofor, a Towson University student lead ambassador, described her experience gaining industry exposure

and peer networking. The program currently engages 11 universities and aims to scale an industry-supported model that reduces employer recruiting costs by 50% to 75%.

Commerce Life Sciences Updates
Dr. Trop recapped Maryland's participation at the Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO) International Convention in San Diego, where Commerce hosted a prominent pavilion adjacent to major industry anchors, sponsored 15 startups, and co-organized a fully booked regional networking reception.

Mr. Gillenwater outlined upcoming fall trade shows, including the AdvaMed MedTech Conference in Boston, featuring a pitch session co-hosted with the Medical Technology Enterprise Consortium (MTEC), which recently relocated its national headquarters to Montgomery County. Commerce will also support 12 companies with a pavilion at HLTH USA in Las Vegas to showcase digital health capabilities.

Dr. Trop presented the operational action plan for Computational Health, one of Maryland's Lighthouse Sectors for economic development. The strategy focuses on applying high-performance computing, AI, quantum, and cybersecurity to healthcare delivery, precision medicine, and drug discovery. Key proposed initiatives up for discussion include establishing a state-chartered Computational Health Alliance, deploying the Maryland Computational Health Infrastructure and Platform (MD-CHIP) in combination with the Chesapeake Regional Information Exchange for our Patients (CRISP) database, launching a Bio-Compute Fellows program, providing early-stage non-dilutive commercialization grants, and facilitating healthcare system access and computational sandboxes aligned with Longevity Ready Maryland program.

Mr. Storey recommended explicitly differentiating between academic versus clinical partners in the proposed Alliance. Academic partners naturally focus on data and computational science, while clinical partners represent specific clinical strengths in the state such as neuro and diagnostics. He also cautioned that competitors already have this in place.

Mr. Bendis asked who will lead the initiative as it scales and whether a dedicated entity will be created beyond Commerce. While agreeing that Maryland has the necessary assets, he stressed urgency to act before losing talent and technology to competing regions, that the state must prioritize because it can’t be all things to all people.

To make the initiative tangible, Mr. Christopher requested concrete case studies or examples illustrating a hypothetical moving from A to Z through the ecosystem.

Dr. Iacona shared that large biopharma already possesses internal computational health capabilities. The greatest value of the state’s plan therefore lies in supporting small startups that lack access to these resources. She also noted how, for example, Massachusetts is already moving forward aggressively on supporting computational life science initiatives.

Mr. Mortenson suggested that the IHC should be leveraged for smaller companies statewide. Commerce should proactively brand and trademark “Computational Health” to establish national

ownership of the category before other states do.

Quantum Working Group
Mr. Bendis presented findings from the LSAB Quantum Working Group. Based on comparative scoring, Maryland ranks second nationally in quantum-biohealth opportunity readiness due to anchor assets such as IonQ, University of Maryland, Johns Hopkins, and federal agencies. However, Maryland lacks a dedicated quantum commercialization platform and early-stage quantum venture fund, risking talent and IP migration to competing states.

Using Quantum Catalyzer (QCAT) in College Park as a functional model, the report identified immediate commercial opportunities in quantum diamond microscopy for pathology, living chemistry quantum microscopy, signal amplification by reversible exchange magnetic resonance imaging (SABRE MRI), and non-invasive brain-computer interfaces. The working group recommended a 90-day validation phase to develop the Maryland Quantum Commercialization Corporation (MQCC), target a $250,000 planning grant, and assemble angel and venture funding vehicles. Dr. Perman requested that Commerce leadership review the proposal to determine next steps.

FDA READI-Home Innovation Challenge
Dr. Margerrison presented on the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Center for Devices and Radiological Health (CDRH) FDA READI-Home Innovation Challenge: Reducing Readmissions through Device Innovation for the Home, which focuses on developing interoperable medical devices designed specifically for home healthcare environments. Phase one application reviews are currently underway, and FDA is in discussions with Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) regarding funding for phase two to pair regulatory guidance with financial awards.

Public Comments and Closing Remarks
Comments from the public emphasized the importance of data engineering, cybersecurity, and workforce readiness to support computational health implementation.

Dr. Perman reminded everyone that the next LSAB meeting will take place on Friday, October 30, 2026, at 4MLK at the University of Maryland BioPark in Baltimore. He thanked the hosts and adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m., followed by an optional tour of Blackbird Laboratories.