

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO



**WENDY HURLBURT, PRESIDENT AND
CEO, LIFESCIENCES BC**

If I had to choose one word to summarize our B.C. life science ecosystem right now, it would be *momentum*.

Life sciences in British Columbia grew substantially in 2019 and, early into 2020, is moving with equal velocity. With strong anchor companies in place, small

and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) growing, world-class research occurring and capital flowing in, we are attracting interest from around the globe. With rising tides lifting all boats, it is truly an exciting time.

In the midst of this increasing momentum, it is important to take a moment to recognize what we have accomplished and celebrate our successes.

Since joining the LifeSciences BC team in April 2019, I have been struck by the number of brilliant people in this province who are moving the needle forward to develop and scale innovation and are truly impacting lives. It is thanks to the years of hard work, determination and collaboration of many that our sector is in the favourable position it is today. People from academia, research institutions, SMEs and large companies have all come together to advance our ecosystem and the life science economy.

Among the many success stories of this past year are two B.C. companies that reached the \$2-billion-market-cap milestone. Aurinia Pharmaceuticals and Zymeworks both made significant progress to advance their therapeutic products, with Aurinia closing a public offering of US\$191.7 million and Zymeworks raising US\$201.3 million. Meanwhile, AbCellera and StarFish Medical were both on the *Globe and Mail*'s list of fastest-growing companies in Canada, and as we go to press, AbCellera is working to help solve the COVID-19 viral infection by working alongside the Pentagon's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, or DARPA. Neoleukin Therapeutics announced a US\$75 million public offering. Chinook Therapeutics likewise raised \$65 million and signed a significant global licensing deal. This is simply years of hard work paying off and pushing a new era in life science forward in B.C.

Digital health continues to emerge as a major player in our space, with rapidly expanding companies like Molecular You, Equicare Health and PHEMI Systems all applying digital technology to support better health delivery and support systems. And in medical technology, BioLytical Laboratories, named B.C. Exporter of the Year, has emerged

as a global leader in point-of-care patient testing.

These success stories are just a small sample of the many achievements of the past year – not to mention the impressive scientific advances of our research institutions.

Throughout all this growth and velocity, LifeSciences BC has remained committed to supporting our membership – from academia to institutions and industry.

We have done this by bringing together key players to connect, exchange ideas and work together. In total, we hosted 27 events with almost 3,000 attendees. This included the Sweden-British Columbia Digital Health Initiative, the largest-ever LifeSciences BC Investor Summit, presented by Lumira Ventures, our first LifeSciences BC-BioTalent Canada Career Connect Day and our always sold-out annual awards gala, among others.

We also have worked to promote the sector internationally. We attended the BIO International Convention in Philadelphia along with a strong B.C. government delegation, and hosted over 20 international missions to Vancouver, specifically interested in building strategic partnerships with B.C. companies. To further define and elevate the knowledge of the sector, we are also collaborating on an economic impact sector report with the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Competitiveness.

Finally, we have worked diligently to forge strong partnerships and build relationships with our entire sector across the province. We designed and delivered a regional showcase series that took us to all corners of B.C. to shine the spotlight on the quality of research and innovation happening from Prince George to Kelowna, Surrey and Victoria. It's wonderfully exciting! LifeSciences BC was also a participant at the B.C. Innovation Roundtable discussions, worked closely with Creative Destruction Lab and expanded our partnerships with adMare BioInnovations, Clinical Trials BC, the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research, Genome BC and many more.

The growing speed of our ecosystem is exhilarating.

You can feel the momentum, you can feel the energy, you can feel the tides changing. Years of hard work by many are paying off, and now is the time for our community to seize the opportunity.

With this momentum, LifeSciences BC remains committed to working on behalf of all members. We are here to ensure our membership has the resources and support it needs to thrive in this new era. Most importantly, we are here to assist our members as they advance health innovation, making a difference in people's lives for a healthier world.

I look forward to working with you all, including our generous sponsors, in what is sure to be another exciting year. 🍀