

# Alliance for Biosecurity

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## Alliance for Biosecurity Press Release

### ALLIANCE FOR BIOSECURITY CO-CHAIR DAVID WRIGHT TO TESTIFY ON BIODEFENSE BEFORE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE

WASHINGTON, DC – (April 6, 2006) – David Wright, president and CEO of PharmAthene, will testify today on the need for targeted new biodefense legislation before the Health Subcommittee of the House Energy & Commerce Committee during its hearing on “BioShield Reauthorization Issues.” Mr. Wright will discuss the important foundation laid by the Project BioShield legislation and the current need for new public/private partnerships and clear government leadership for medical countermeasure development. He will also discuss the critical need to provide adequate funding and support for companies involved in high-risk biodefense discovery and development projects.

Mr. Wright will testify on behalf of the Alliance for Biosecurity, a consortium consisting of the non-profit Center for Biosecurity of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and 12 pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies committed to promoting a new era in the prevention and treatment of severe infectious diseases – particularly those that present global security challenges. The Alliance includes companies working on infectious diseases, companies that have been awarded BioShield contracts, and other companies poised to compete for new biodefense procurement contracts.

Mr. Wright said that the “modest number of companies now working on biodefense projects are increasingly unlikely to continue to invest in this challenging area absent strong new biodefense legislation that supports and facilitates countermeasures development and procurement for our nation’s Strategic National Stockpile.”

Mr. Wright will provide to the Subcommittee recommendations from the Alliance for Biosecurity.

#### **Establish a Clear Central Authority**

On behalf of the Alliance, Mr. Wright will emphasize the need for government to assign clear responsibility for overseeing countermeasures research, discovery, development, and procurement to a central biodefense authority. The Alliance believes that it is critical to consolidate and streamline authority for biosecurity. Currently, companies investing in biodefense projects must deal with a bewildering array of government agencies with overlapping authority. Mr. Wright will also emphasize the need to dramatically increase the number of people within HHS who have deep expertise in commercial drug discovery and development.

#### **Build a New Partnership Between Government and Industry**

Mr. Wright will articulate the Alliance’s vision of a new public/private partnership characterized by a marked increase in the nature and frequency of communications between government and industry on countermeasure development needs, including timelines, budgets, and priorities. Alliance members believe that in order for Project BioShield to be successful, a true partnership must include equally shared responsibilities in the development of biodefense products, from the government’s initial interactions with a company through the final procurement of the

products. He will discuss industry's interest in partnering responsibly with government to step up US efforts to obtain needed medicines and vaccines for the Nation's stockpile.

### **Adequately Fund Biosecurity**

Mr. Wright will explain the Alliance's view that the current BioShield reserve fund of \$5.6 billion is insufficient to address all but a few of the most pressing biological threats. Approximately \$1 billion of the fund has already been committed for the procurement of three countermeasures. According to a Defense Science Board study in 2000, countermeasures will be needed for at least 19 agents considered to be major threats. "Industry is looking to Congress and the Administration to signal that biosecurity preparedness is a national security priority justifying a considerable commitment by the government. In order to do this, a major paradigm shift is needed in how our Nation thinks about defense against bioterrorism," Mr. Wright said.

The Alliance is interested in continuing an active dialogue with Congress during its deliberations on how to improve BioShield. Mr. Wright will urge Congress to make a decisive commitment now to biosecurity and to spur a like commitment by innovators in what is a race against time. "There is an increasing gap between available countermeasures and the infrastructure to create them on one side, and the clear and growing danger that biothreats pose to our country's security," said Mr. Wright

### **About the Alliance for Biosecurity**

The Alliance for Biosecurity was formed in June of 2005 by pharmaceutical companies, biotechnology companies and the Center for Biosecurity of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. Alliance members are committed to partnering with government and promoting a new era in the prevention and treatment of severe infectious diseases – particularly those that present global security challenges – through innovative and accelerated research, development and production of countermeasures. Company members of the Alliance include: Acambis, Inc., Caprion Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Chiron Corporation, DOR BioPharma, Inc., Dynport Vaccines Co., Emergent BioSolutions, GlaxoSmithKline, Human Genome Sciences, Inc., Pfizer, Inc., PharmAthene, and VaxGen, Inc.

### **About David Wright**

Mr. Wright is President and CEO of PharmAthene, a privately-held biotechnology company formed to meet the critical needs of the United States by developing biodefense products, such as novel biotherapeutics to address biological pathogens and chemicals that may be used as weapons of bioterror. Prior to joining PharmAthene in 2003, Mr. Wright served as President and Chief Operating Officer of GenVec Inc., and previously as President and Chief Business Officer of Guilford Pharmaceuticals. Mr. Wright also served as Executive Vice President for MedImmune, Inc from 1990 to 2000 and has held various marketing and sales positions at pharmaceutical companies, including Smith-Kline & French, G.D. Searle, and Glaxo.

### **About the Hearing**

The hearing will be in Room 2123 of the Rayburn House Office Building at 1:00 PM on Thursday, April 6, 2006. David Wright's complete testimony will be available at the hearing and from the Alliance Secretary and Legal Counsel.

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