

## Drug Development and Innovation Discussed at Life Science Caucus Meeting

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Rep. Donna White and Sharon Brigner of PhRMA at Life Science Caucus meeting

The North Carolina General Assembly's Life Science Caucus met on May 22 to learn more about the U.S. pharmaceutical industry, the promise of new therapies and the costs of drug development.

"More than 7000 new medicines are in development around the world," Sharon Brigner, PhRMA Deputy Vice President, State Policy, told the Caucus. "Medicines are transforming the treatment of devastating diseases. On average 70% of the drugs are potential first-in-class therapies, meaning they use a completely new approach to fighting a disease."

Brigner said, "The biopharmaceutical sector is the single largest funder of business R&D in the United States." In looking at drug pricing, she stated, "After discounts and rebates, brand medicine pricing grew just 3.5% in 2016. Total prescription medicine spending is expected to remain constant at about 14% of total health care expenditures from 2015 through 2025 even as many new treatments reach patients."



Mike McBrierty of Biogen speaks at Life Science Caucus meeting

Mike McBrierty, Director of State Public Policy & Government Affairs for Biogen, talked with lawmakers about the pressing need for drugs to treat Alzheimer's disease. He discussed Biogen's efforts to develop drugs in this area, highlighting the risk, time and expense involved with a particular focus on their experimental drug Aducanumab, which had to be discontinued after it failed to meet objectives in phase III clinical trials.

McBrierty noted that Alzheimer's is the 6th leading cause of death in the US, and the number of cases is expected to increase in the coming years. He said that Biogen will continue to pursue development of other Alzheimer's treatments in its product pipeline.

Sam Taylor. "In future meetings, we hope to provide information about new therapies under development in North Carolina and their impact on patient health and the cost of healthcare."