

HIGHLIGHTS FROM BIO INTERNATIONAL 2026

Over 20,000 biopharma industry professionals converged in sunny San Diego at [BIO International](#) for four days of networking, learning and dealmaking. What did we learn?

KEY TAKEAWAYS IN NUMBERS

\$500bn

at risk from patent expiries¹

\$2tn

projected pharma market value by 2032²

41 out of **58**

Emerging biotechs behind 41 out of 58 **novel drug approvals at FDA** last year³

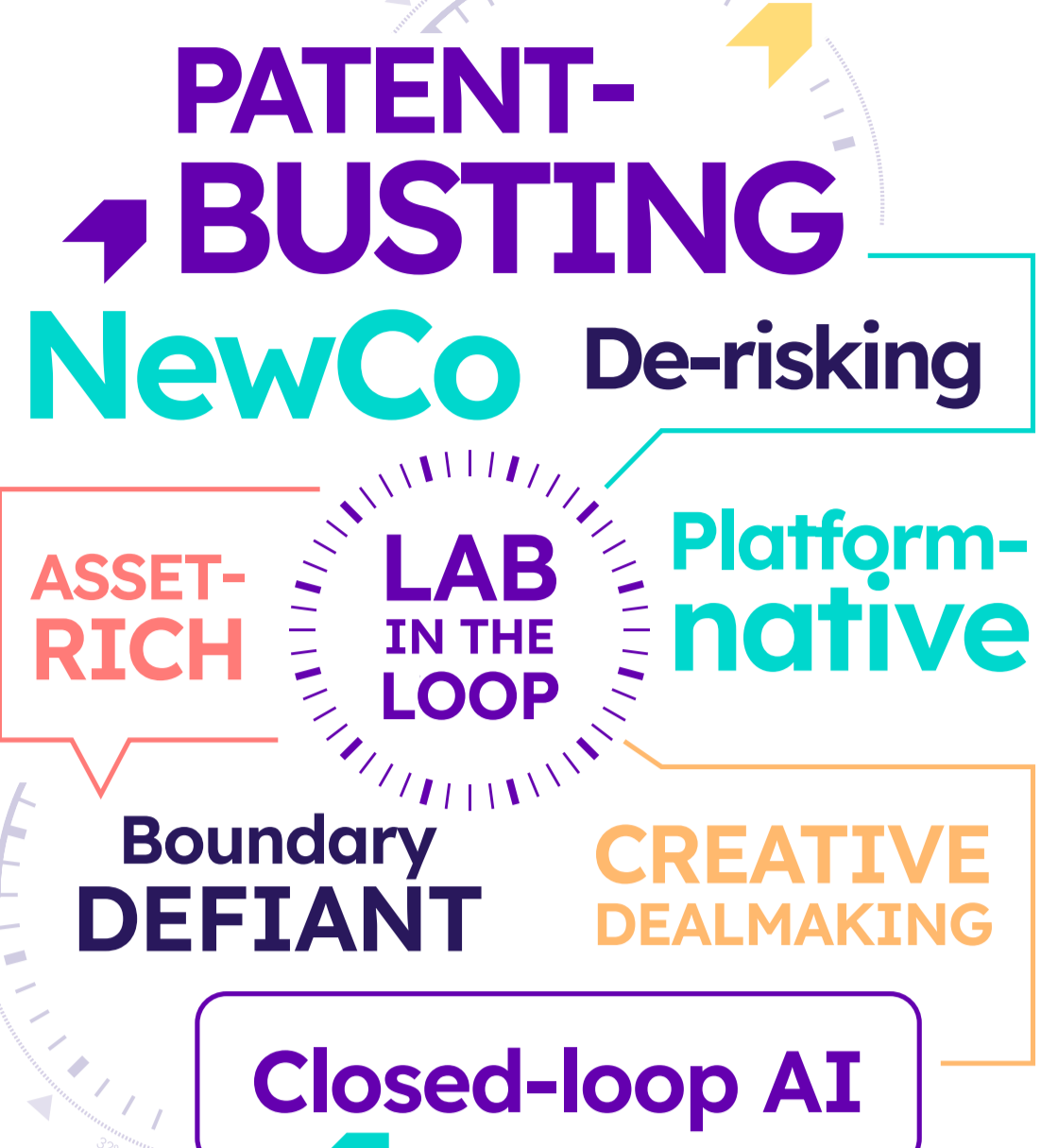
1000+

rare disease therapies **abandoned** due to economic and policy shifts⁴

China is still gaining relative share from US and Europe - now at ~30%,

but exponential growth phase is over.⁵

BIO BUZZWORDS 2026



THE PATENT CLIFF IS DRIVING DEALMAKING

- M&A is at a pre-pandemic high, fueled by looming loss of exclusivity on blockbusters.
- Pharma is buying time, not just assets.
- The clock is running out.

“Just because you have a product going off patent in oncology doesn’t mean you’re only looking for oncology to fill that need.”

“We have an IPO market that is open but discerning.”

“It is a lot about science and differentiated science, but it’s also a lot about people.”



CHINESE BIOTECH HAS ARRIVED, AND SO HAS THE POLITICAL RISK

- Chinese biotech has moved from me-too to genuinely differentiated.
- The deal pace is extraordinary, but regulatory uncertainty is already stalling transactions.
- Most speakers agree that blocking deals with China is not the answer to boosting the Western biotech industry.

“My obligation is to help bring the best medicines to human health. I don’t really care where they come from.”

“The assets were from China, but the exit, the deals we will be making will be global.”

“Competition is a good thing for patients. Talent is everywhere, opportunity is not.”



AI HAS BECOME DEAL CURRENCY, BUT THE LAB IS IN THE LOOP

- AI is transforming drug discovery, but the most compelling platforms combine computational power with high-scale experimental validation.
- Data quality beats model sophistication every time.

“You can now design an antibody on the computer and with very high probability it will actually work in the wet lab.”

“AI allows us to torture the data and let it confess.”

“The AI is not actually making the decisions. The human is unable to interpret all the data without the AI. It’s a partnership.”



GLP-1S SOLVED THE EASY PART OF METABOLIC DISEASE

- Weight loss drugs transformed obesity and destigmatized the disease.
- Muscle loss, tolerability, and residual cardiovascular risk remain opportunities for innovation.

“GLP-1s have brought back obesity as a disease. They’ve moved away from stigma and brought it to the science.”

“A large percentage of the weight lost can be muscle - and muscle is a major metabolic organ.”

“How do we keep people on GLP-1s for the long term? This is not a sprint, it’s a marathon.”



RARE DISEASE IS A MATH PROBLEM, NOT A SCIENCE ONE

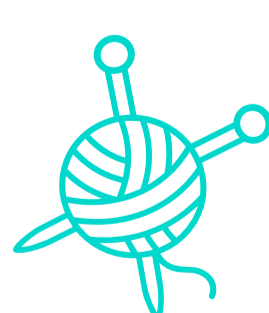
- Over 1,000 therapies have been shelved not because the science failed but because the commercial calculus doesn’t work.
- Patient advocates are building entirely new funding and development models.

“Most genetic diseases did not have treatments - not because it was a science problem, because it was a business model problem, a systems problem.”

“We need to share data on our failures. Think about how much time, energy, money, lives are wasted because someone’s pursuing a path that somebody else already failed in.”

“I hope that companies realize how inspiring it is to work on rare diseases, to meet with families, to understand what they’re going through, and not just develop another weight loss drug. Come on, guys.”

Our favorite QUOTES



“Stick to your knitting, man.

There’s just so much innovation going on around the world, and just because we’re all talking about China, it doesn’t mean that amazing science isn’t happening in small companies in the United States and Europe”

Lesley Stolz, J&J

“We have Star Wars medicines and technology, but we have the Flintstone system. So, let’s catch up with ourselves and make it work.”

Freda Lewis-Hall



“Beer is also biotech, for that matter. And wine. But let’s stay medical for today.”

Steffen Thirstrup
PhD, Chief Medical Officer, EMA



Achieve more with confidence.

More from BIO International

Contact us today to get started