



## **Lilly CEO Stresses Human Element in Driving Medical Innovation**

### **Los Angeles Town Hall Speech Outlines Policies to Advance Medicine in New Decade**

LOS ANGELES, Jan 14, 2010 /PRNewswire via COMTEX News Network/ -- In the keynote address at a Town Hall Los Angeles luncheon event today, John C. Lechleiter, Ph.D., chairman and CEO of Eli Lilly and Company, said that in the current challenging economic times, sustaining our nation's edge in innovation and improving our focus on medical innovation's richest resource - people - is imperative to achieving prosperity and health in the coming decade. His speech focused on bioscience innovation, a sector in which Los Angeles boasts one of the largest concentrations of jobs in the country.

Lechleiter outlined three policies necessary to foster innovation:

- Broad improvement in science and math education in our grade schools and high schools,
- Immigration policies that encourage top scientists to choose to work in the United States, and
- Sustained funding in basic research.

Lechleiter said that talented people and their ideas are essential to driving innovation in the bioscience sector and creating new treatments and cures for patients. Medical innovation has led to longer life spans and enhanced livelihoods, with well-paid jobs. "We tend to think of innovation in terms of technology, science, and labs but innovation is essentially the application of human ingenuity to improve human life," said Lechleiter. "To fully appreciate innovation, we have to see and understand clearly its benefits for humankind."

Lechleiter explained that a broad understanding of math and science is essential for young people to participate in the high-tech economy of the future, and said the U.S. is falling short on science and math education:

- 15-year-old American students rank poorly against other countries
- Average scores for 12th graders in the sciences have declined, and
- The number of U.S. college students pursuing bachelor's degrees in science, technology, engineering and math is insufficient to meet future demands.

Lechleiter called for "a common effort as a society to develop whole new generations of Americans with knowledge and skills in math and science, a large pool from which great scientists and breakthrough ideas will emerge."

Turning to immigration policy, Lechleiter stated that the very best scientists are needed in pharmaceutical research. Currently, he said, many of the top candidates emerging from graduate schools in the U.S. are neither citizens nor permanent residents, and they run up against severe limits on the number of H1B visas.

"We must fix the policies that are driving away talented people who want to live here and contribute to our economy," said Lechleiter. "This does not require drastic changes, just a sensible increase in visas for these highly skilled immigrants and a shorter, simpler process to get a green card."

Refuting arguments that such policies take jobs away from Americans, Lechleiter stated that the best minds in science lead to strong businesses that help create jobs and drive innovation. "It surely beats the alternative," he said, "talented people returning to their native country or going elsewhere to start or help a foreign firm to compete against us."

Lechleiter also called for a long-term commitment to steady federal research funding, particularly for the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation and other agencies that pursue and support basic research and train young scientists.

Lechleiter said that the academic and government research has "historically operated synergistically with the private biopharmaceutical sector," and that "our nation's innovation engine works best when we're firing on all cylinders."

Despite current economic problems, Lechleiter warned against seeing innovation as a luxury. "Who among us can witness the impact of cancer, Alzheimer's disease, and other scourges and say, 'We have all the medical innovation we need?' In fact, innovation may help us overcome fiscal as well as medical and technological challenges; in a world of increasingly constrained budgets, scientific innovation is likely to create new and less expensive treatment alternatives."

## About Lilly

Lilly, a leading innovation-driven corporation, is developing a growing portfolio of pharmaceutical products by applying the latest research from its own worldwide laboratories and from collaborations with eminent scientific organizations. Headquartered in Indianapolis, Ind., Lilly provides answers – through medicines and information – for some of the world's most urgent medical needs. Additional information about Lilly is available at [www.lilly.com](http://www.lilly.com)

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