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Investors in Science Need Partners That Can Scale Alongside Innovation

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Whitney Herd, Vice President, Business Development, Sales & Marketing, Agilent Advanced Therapeutics, discusses CDMO evolution, oligonucleotide manufacturing, supply chain resilience, and the future of advanced therapy development.



As advanced therapeutics move from scientific promise to commercial reality, the industry's focus is shifting beyond discovery toward scalable manufacturing, supply chain resilience, and integrated development capabilities. From oligonucleotides and gene editing to microbial fermentation and precision medicine, developers increasingly require partners that can support complex programs across the entire product lifecycle. In this conversation with **BioSpectrum Asia during BIO International Convention 2026, Whitney Herd, Vice President of Business Development, Sales & Marketing at Agilent Advanced Therapeutics,** discusses how the integration of BIOVECTRA has expanded Agilent's CDMO capabilities, the growing demand for nucleic acid manufacturing, and the trends that will shape advanced therapeutics over the next five years.

Following the integration of BIOVECTRA, how is Agilent Advanced Therapeutics strengthening its end-to-end CDMO offering across the advanced therapeutics and biopharmaceutical manufacturing landscape?

As of March 2026, our newly launched Agilent Advanced Therapeutics (AAT) offers both pharmaceutical and biotechnology partners a broadened portfolio of advanced therapeutic modalities. This division has been created by the integration of the Canadian BIOVECTRA business that Agilent acquired in 2024 with our Colorado based nucleic acids division. Our capabilities now include microbial fermentation, complex chemistry, bioreagents, highly potent APIs such as payloads, oligonucleotides, cell line development, and CRISPR solutions. As a CDMO division of Agilent, AAT belongs to an organization that is a recognized leader in 110 countries serving life sciences, diagnostics, and applied markets with instruments, software, consumables, and services. The organization is steeped in manufacturing, R&D, regulatory, and quality. The AAT division and its customers are beneficiaries of that breadth of know-how, best practices, and systems which culminate in our new tagline "***Invested in science. Invested in You.***" Clients recognize the bespoke approach we

take for each project, the technical savviness and guidance afforded to them, and the world class talent at our sites. It is also exciting for us as we think about the future offerings we could bring to client when potentially combining our proficiency with oligonucleotides (Colorado) with some of our complex chemistry and biologics capabilities (Canada).

What strategic advantages does the combination of nucleic acid manufacturing capabilities across Canada and the United States provide for customers navigating clinical and commercial scale development?

We deliver the most advanced manufacturing modalities to power complex, breakthrough molecules, alongside the tools and instruments that accelerate research, streamline testing, and optimize workflows. Many of our partners who require services such as GLP-1 purification or oligonucleotide synthesis are the same customers that are searching for bioreagents, such as cGMP DTT, TCEP, or DHAA, or complex chemistry solutions. Now they have access to all these modalities from one supplier which simplifies the procurement and supply chain processes and allows efficiencies. Customers also are benefiting from our R&D capabilities where AAT is focused on process development, analytical services, and helping clients scale from development to larger scale manufacturing. Our R&D group offers expertise across recombinant proteins, plasmid DNA, lipids, microbial fermentation, cell lines development, HPAPI's, conjugation, peptides, and other areas, and are available to assist partners who require problem solving and solutions pertaining to upstream or downstream.

Could you share an update on the new oligonucleotide manufacturing lines at the Frederick, Colorado facility, and the role they will play in supporting future customer demand?

Agilent has two sites in Colorado, in both Boulder and Frederick, and is one of the largest dedicated GMP oligonucleotide manufacturing operations in the world. As the recognized leader in the oligonucleotide synthesis market, we have continued to invest in this space to ensure our partners have the capacity required to bring their life changing discoveries to market. By March 2027 will add a single new manufacturing line (Train C) in Frederick followed by another train (Train D) six months later with the latter intended for gene-editing and rare disease batch profiles. AAT's ability to handle additional volume will be critical to the industry, especially as we see more oligonucleotides come to market that are addressing not only rare and orphan diseases, more prevalent chronic conditions, too. AAT is positioned to be the preferred choice for clients seeking bespoke approaches in all major oligo classes across development, clinical, and commercial programs. While manufacturing is at our core, we offer robust analytical, process, testing and quality services, too. Our Colorado teams have successfully delivered 7 commercially approved oligo therapeutics to the market since 2006, and these therapies are deriving patient benefits across multiple countries.

What are the most significant manufacturing and supply chain challenges currently facing developers of advanced therapeutics, and how is Agilent helping customers address them?

The nature of our business requires highly specialized global supply chains with advanced planning and ordering of materials. We have team members devoted to monitoring the availability of such materials, so timelines are not jeopardized and the burden is removed from our clients. We also are observing a constriction of available market capacity for modalities such as microbial fermentation, where options can be limited relative to certain types of equipment such as large volume reactors. For example, Agilent Advanced Therapeutics has two 17K liter fermenters and we see pharma partners approaching us years in advance of anticipated market launch to understand our capabilities and to secure the volume. Some of the anticipated therapies they are developing will offer patient benefits such as less frequent dosing, better tolerability, or fill a void where no effective approach is currently available. When those products achieve regulatory approval, our clients expect rapid uptake and want to know supplies will be ready.

What trends do you believe will have the greatest impact on the CDMO sector over the next three to five years, particularly in cell therapy, gene therapy, RNA based therapeutics, and precision medicine?

We are definitely seeing a trend toward more collaborative, joint planning discussions with our clients around long term site, equipment, and technology preferences to administer their programs, cultivating talent adept at these emerging areas, sustainability measures that collectively make us better stewards of the environment, and recognition of where AI, automation, and digital-centric operating models can be most impactful. These must be assessed along with macroeconomic realities such as capital pullbacks, biotech funding, tariffs, global regulatory and supply chain pressures.

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