Symposium Presenters

Industry Spotlight Presenters

Jonathan Biller
Executive Vice President &
Chief Legal Officer
Vertex Pharmaceuticals

Jonathan Biller joined Vertex in 2022 and is Executive Vice President and Chief Legal Officer. He serves on the company's Executive Committee and oversees all aspects of Vertex's global legal and compliance functions. He has deep legal, industry and business experience and expertise that will support the company's continued growth. Mr. Biller joined Vertex from Agios Pharmaceuticals, where he served in several executive roles, including Chief Legal Officer and most recently Chief Financial Officer and Head of Corporate Affairs. Prior to this, he served as Executive Vice President, General Counsel at Celgene, where he was responsible for its global legal function, and before that as Senior Vice President, Tax and Treasury. Prior to Celgene, Mr. Biller was General Counsel, Chief Tax Officer and Secretary at Bunge Limited, a publicly traded agriculture and food company, and held roles of increasing responsibility at Alcon, Inc. during which time it was a publicly traded company. He began his legal career at Hopkins & Sutter, rising to the level of partner, and was also partner at Foley & Lardner after the firms merged.

Alejandra Carvajal
Senior Vice President
Chief Legal Officer
Mersana Therapeutics

Alejandra joined Mersana Therapeutics in 2021, with 20 years of experience of legal leadership and transformational business development experience. Before joining Mersana, Alejandra was the Chief Legal Officer, General Counsel & Secretary at Momenta Pharmaceuticals, where she led the company's legal operations through both business restructuring and the successful

acquisition by Johnson & Johnson for $6.5 billion. She also served as a key strategic legal partner in the company's financing, business development, and contractual decision-making efforts. Prior to joining Momenta, Alejandra served as the Vice President, General Counsel at Cerulean Pharma. Previously, she worked at Millennium Pharmaceuticals in several positions of increasing seniority, where she was the legal business partner to Millennium's R&D, business development, manufacturing and commercial functions. She also held positions earlier in her career at the law firms Day, Berry & Howard LLP and Hill & Barlow.

Jon Civitarese
Senior Managing Director,
Investment Banking
SVB Securities

Jon Civitarese is a Senior Managing Director in Investment Banking at SVB Securities. Jon was one of the firm's earliest employees when he joined in 1995, providing advisory services to high-net-worth individuals in the Private Client Group prior to moving to Investment Banking. Since 1999, his activities have included advising public and private life science companies on strategic initiatives and equity capital financings as part of the firm's investment banking team. In addition to his primary banking responsibilities, he has also served as a senior member of the equity capital markets and syndicate team since 2001. He began his career by serving in the U.S. Army as an infantry soldier, and later graduated from the University of Maine.

Andrew Cohen
Vice President & Head Counsel,
R&D Legal
Takeda Pharmaceuticals

Andrew Cohen is Vice President & Head Counsel, R&D Legal at Takeda Pharmaceuticals. Andrew leads a global team of 35 legal professionals supporting global R&D, global licensing and alliance management, and global clinical operations. Member of global general counsel's staff responsible for strategic direction of the company's global general counsel function. Provide strategic guidance to senior executives, including company c-suite and members of the board of directors. Build and lead teams of attorneys responsible for best-in-industry provision of legal services for the most complex matters in the company, including strategic partnering deals, M&A, venture investment, digital transformation initiatives, privacy, ethics and compliance counseling, issues attendant to overseas expansion, regulatory and other complex substantive areas of law.

Lesley DeRenzo
Director & Legal Senior Counsel
Vertex Pharmaceuticals

Lesley DeRenzo has been a Director & Legal Senior Counsel at Vertex Pharmaceuticals for over three years. She has deep regulatory and policy experience working with globally diverse,

market-leading organizations and industries. Prior to Vertex, Lesley served for six years as Regulatory Counsel for U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Before that, she worked for The National Institutes of Health as their Senior Health Science Policy Advisor & Congressional Liaison. Lesley started her legal career as an Associate Attorney in the Health Industry Advisory Practice Group at McDermott Will & Emery.

Robert Hesslein
Senior Vice President &
General Counsel
Voyager Therapeutics

Robert Hesslein joined Voyager Therapeutics in 2019 and is Senior Vice President & General Counsel overseeing all legal functions and operations. He has extensive experience building and leading legal organizations with knowledge in all fundamental business law areas. Before joining Voyager Therapeutics, Robert was also Senior Vice President & General Counsel at Foundation Medicine where he was responsible for the delivery of all legal services. Prior to joining Foundation Medicine, Robert was also Senior Vice President & Deputy General at Genzyme Corporation in charge of non-IP legal services for their commercial units and all significant functional areas. Prior to that, Robert was Second Vice President & Counsel at The New England and was responsible for general corporate support for all investment activities, with concentration in real estate finance. The early part of his career was at Csaplar & Bok, ascending to the level of partner.

Tim Opler, Ph.D.
Managing Director
Torreya

Tim Opler, a Managing Director at Torreya, manages client relationships and oversees the firm's administrative activities. Tim has 24 years of experience leading strategic and financing transactions across multiple sectors. For nearly 20 years, he has focused exclusively on life sciences advisory; he has completed more than 150 financing, licensing, and M&A transactions across the industry with a total value of over $100 billion. Highlights include running the largest share buyback in history for Pfizer, leading a $3.9 billion convertible bond exchange for Amgen, working on Chiron's $5.1 billion sale to Novartis, and managing Genentech's inaugural $2 billion bond issue.

Eric Rogers
Vice President, Global Pipeline
and U.S. Commercial Law
Alexion Pharmaceuticals

Eric Rogers has served in positions of increasing responsibility in the Alexion Legal Department, starting as an individual contributor advising the global commercial strategy team, and progressing to managing a group of nine attorneys, with responsibility for coordinating all legal

support for the Global and US Commercial and Medical Affairs functions. In this role, Eric reports directly to the Alexion General Counsel, serves as a member of the Legal, US Commercial, and VISion (global commercial strategy) leadership teams, and frequently interacts with Alexion's C-Suite executives.

James Schneider
Deputy General Counsel
RA Capital Management, L.P.

James Schneider is the Deputy General Counsel at RA Capital Management. James' primary responsibilities are to advise RA Capital on public and private investments, coordinate with portfolio companies regarding deal structures and terms, and provide counsel and oversight on regulatory matters. James holds a BS in Journalism from Boston University and a JD from Boston College Law School. He previously worked as a corporate attorney at Foley Hoag LLP and Cooley LLP. James is admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Covington Presenters

Krista Carver
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Krista Carver co-chairs Covington's Life Sciences Pharmaceutical and Biotechnology Industry Group. Drawing on her 15 years of experience at the firm, she provides strategic and practical advice to clients on an array of FDA regulatory issues. Krista also assists clients with advocacy before FDA, including formal dispute resolution and citizen petitions, and maintains an active policy practice addressing legislative issues surrounding amendments to the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and related laws.

Scott Danzis
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Scott Danzis co-chairs Covington's Medical Device Industry Group and is a leading expert on the regulation of medical devices, diagnostics, and digital health. He regularly helps clients navigate their most complex regulatory challenges, including strategies for premarket review, postmarket compliance, and enforcement actions. Scott counsels many of the world's preeminent medical device companies on a range of matters, including advertising and promotion, recalls, quality system issues, medical device reporting, clinical and non-clinical testing, FDA inspections, and other regulatory matters.

Rujul Desai
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Rujul Desai is a partner in Covington's Health Care practice and advises clients on drug pricing, market access, reimbursement, strategic contracting, and regulatory solutions for drugs, biologicals, devices, and diagnostics. He brings deep experience with biopharma, specialty pharmacy, and pharmacy benefit management (PBM) companies. Rujul has held a number of leadership roles in the biopharma, PBM, and specialty pharmacy industry, including with CVS Caremark, UCB, and most recently as Vice President at Avalere Health. Rujul is an author of the U.S. chapter of a global treatise on drug pricing and reimbursement.

Stefanie Doebler
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Stefanie Doebler co-chairs Covington's Health Care Practice Group, and is a member of the Food, Drug, and Device Practice Group. Her practice focuses on health care compliance matters for pharmaceutical, biotech, and medical device clients. She provides advice related to advertising and promotion, fraud and abuse, transparency requirements, state law compliance and reporting regulations, interactions with health care professionals, Medicaid price reporting, and other aspects of federal and state regulation of pharmaceuticals, biologics, and medical devices. Stefanie also advises on the development and implementation of health care compliance programs.

David Fagan
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David Fagan co-chairs Covington's top ranked practices on cross-border investment and national security matters, including reviews conducted by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), and data privacy and cybersecurity. In the foreign investment and national security area, David is known for his work on matters requiring the mitigation of foreign ownership, control or influence (FOCI) under applicable national industrial security regulations, including for many of the world's leading aerospace and defense firms, private equity firms, and sovereign investors, as well as telecommunications transactions that undergo a public safety, law enforcement, and national security review by the group of agencies known as "Team Telecom."

Pamela Forrest
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Pamela Forrest co-chairs Covington's Medical Device Industry Group and has over 25 years of experience advising clients on a broad range of FDA regulatory issues. Her practice focuses on FDA medical device matters, including premarket notification, premarket approval, product recalls, Medical Device Reporting (MDR), Quality System Regulation (QSR) compliance, establishment registration and device listing, labeling and promotion, import/export issues, and clinical trial requirements.

Megan Gates
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Megan Gates is a partner in Covington's Securities and Capital Markets practice and has been guiding publicly traded and late-stage private companies, primarily in the life sciences industry, through capital-raising transactions, SEC reporting compliance and corporate governance obligations, as well as strategic mergers and acquisitions' for over 25 years. Her clients benefit from the client-focused perspective she gained during a prior in-house counsel role with Thermo Electron Corporation, where she was responsible for securities offerings and compliance for the corporation and its 23 publicly traded subsidiaries. Megan frequently speaks at conferences on securities offerings, corporate governance, and compliance matters. She is also active in community organizations in Boston, including serving as a Board member or other leadership roles with the Pine Street Inn, the Boston Bar Foundation, and the Japan Society of Boston.

Sarah Hoagland
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Sarah Hoagland is of counsel in Covington's Life Sciences Transactions practice. Her practice focuses on transactions for pharmaceutical and biotechnology clients, including licensing and collaboration arrangements, acquisitions and divestitures of pharmaceutical companies and products, marketing and co-promotion agreements, and supply and distribution transactions.

Christina Kuhn
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Christina Kuhn is special counsel in Covington's Medical Device Industry Group and multidisciplinary Digital Health Initiative. Her practice focuses on advising medical device, pharmaceutical, and biotech companies on a broad range of FDA regulatory strategy and compliance matters. She has experience with cutting-edge and complex medical technologies, including software and digital health products, oncology products, next-generation sequencing, diagnostics, and combination products.

Michael Labson
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Mike Labson co-chairs Covington's global Life Sciences practice and has been a trusted advisor to pharmaceutical and biotechnology clients for over 25 years. He draws on his wide range of regulatory expertise to provide strategic and compliance advice, and address FDA and other health care law issues in litigation, investigations, and transactions. He previously served in a number of firm leadership positions, including as a member of the firm's Management Committee and Executive Committee and as co-chair of the Diversity Committee.

Emily Leonard
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Emily Leonard is the Managing Partner of Covington's Palo Alto office and a member of the firm's Life Sciences Transactions practice. She specializes in life sciences-related technology transactions, including complex strategic partnering and collaboration agreements, joint ventures, licensing, and other technology transfer arrangements. Emily also advises clients on the full range of clinical and commercial agreements that span the life cycle of a drug product or medical device. She is a recognized leader in commercial life sciences transactions, ranked by Chambers USA, Legal 500 US, Northern California Super Lawyers, and was honored by The Daily Journal among its Top Women Lawyers.

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Micaela McMurrough co-chairs Covington's global and multi-disciplinary Technology Group, and the Artificial Intelligence and Internet of Things (IoT) initiative. In her practice, she has represented clients in high-stakes antitrust, patent, trade secrets, contract, and securities litigation, and other complex commercial litigation matters, and she regularly represents and advises domestic and international clients on cybersecurity and data privacy issues, including cybersecurity investigations and cyber incident response. Micaela has advised clients on data breaches and other network intrusions, conducted cybersecurity investigations, and advised clients regarding evolving cybersecurity regulations and cybersecurity norms in the context of international law.

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Kim Strosnider co-chairs the firm’s International Trade Controls practice and advises companies on the application of international trade controls, including export controls, economic sanctions, and antiboycott laws and regulations. Kim counsels clients across a range of industries on trade control matters, including resolving complex compliance, enforcement, licensing, and jurisdiction/classification issues. She regularly advocates for clients before the key trade controls agencies, including the U.S. Departments of State, Commerce, and Treasury.