



March 20, 2023

BioNTX Remarks to the 2023 Texas House of Representatives Higher Education Committee

To the Honorable Members of the 2023 Texas House of Representatives
Higher Education Committee,

My name is Kathleen Otto, and I am the CEO of BIO North Texas (BioNTX).
BioNTX is the regional trade organization, and we are leading the effort in North Texas to
establish our region as a globally recognized hub for innovation within the life science industry.

Our organization advocates for policies designed to improve the business environment for the
life science and healthcare innovation industries.

We champion smart investments in science-based, patient-focused companies and policies that
ensure the North Texas economy flourishes.

Thank you for providing BioNTX an opportunity to speak with you this morning and offer
support for the **Mental Health and Brain Research Institute of Texas (MBRIT) HB 15 & HJR 135**
as a means of continuing the State of Texas' research excellence. Passing the MBRIT Bill will
further enable the growth of our State economy and serve patients around the world.

The cost of mental health and brain related diseases to our State is incalculable when you
consider lost wages and productivity of law enforcement, caregivers and opportunities taken
from those who are afflicted. The Texas Department of State Health Services recently
estimated the economic burden of Alzheimer's disease alone [cost our state \\$321 billion in
2022](#). Texas spends billions of dollars each year to directly treat and care for other diseases of
the brain as well.

The voters of Texas have made it clear that they strongly support ambitious research programs
that address healthcare challenges.

The Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) is perhaps the best example of
our shared understanding that investment in research and solutions pay for themselves many
times over. CPRIT is an example of what supporting science can do for our economy. I am
personally aware of a number of companies that have moved to Texas for CPRIT funding.

A prime example of this success is the recent purchase of Dallas based Peloton by Merck.
Peloton was a company that formed through early investment in technology funded by CPRIT
and now there is a drug on the market impacting patients. The MBRIT Bill will attract great
scientists and companies to Texas.

The next step for Texas is to take on mental health and brain disease.

When Texas invests in innovation, it pays off. In fact, the return on investment for publicly
funded scientific research and development is somewhere between [30 and 100 percent, and
often much more](#). From MD Anderson in Houston to the UTSW Medical Center in Dallas – and
many points in between – we have seen the multiplier effect that comes from establishing



centers of excellence. Texas has the expertise in Brain Research seen just last November during the UT Systemwide Brain Research Symposium in Austin.

In Texas, innovation doesn't just save lives, it fuels our economy. Our state's thriving innovative healthcare industry has grown directly from publicly funded research. We must continue making those investments to stay competitive in the 21st century.

Funding the Mental Health and Brain Research Institute of Texas is the right thing to do. It is an example of responsible government doing what is best for patients, the entire health system, and the State economy.

We cannot afford to put the brakes on research spending. Instead, we must accelerate our investment in research.

MBRIT will improve the health of Texans while tackling the spiraling costs of mental health and neurological diseases. This legislation will once again mark Texas as a leader in advancing healthcare solutions and attract the best and the brightest to our State.

Of course, there is a larger truth here beyond plain economics. The heartbreak of parents whose child has been born with a presently incurable brain condition, the pain felt by a child watching their parent lose speech to a stroke, the exhaustion and loneliness of a spouse caring for an Alzheimer's Disease patient or the frustration and fear felt by an individual being overtaken by Parkinson's Disease or suffering from tragedy due to mental illness – none of these can be assigned a price tag or scored for budgetary purposes.

Who in this room has not been affected by mental illness or brain disease.

Thank you All again for your attention to passing the MBRIT Bill. It is the next right thing for the State's economy and for patients around the world.

Kathleen M. Otto

CEO – BioNTX

March 20, 2023

www.BioNTX.org