

# COMMENTARY

## Medical technology is a key driver of New Jersey's life sciences engine

### Your Turn

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Guest columnist

New Jersey has long been globally recognized as the “Medicine Chest of the World” for its large and vibrant life sciences community. Our state proudly claims a broad swath of biopharmaceutical, biotech and medical device, diagnostic and medical technology companies that are central to New Jersey’s ability to lead the world in medical innovation and advance our state’s economy. Today, we highlight the medical device, diagnostic and medical technology sector, a powerful contributor worthy of recognition.

With 11 of the world’s 20 largest medical technology companies making the Garden State either their global, North American or U.S. headquarters or maintaining a significant presence here, this sector supports over 63,000 New Jersey jobs and generates \$12.6 billion in annual economic activity in our state. These jobs run the gamut from headquarters facilities to research and development or highly skilled, highly trained manufacturing and distribution activities – all of which rely on New Jersey’s status as one of the best-educated workforces in the world.

What constitutes medical technology today? What is considered a “medical device” or diagnostic tool? This category has grown dramatically, and includes instruments, machines, implants and tests that enable health care professionals to diagnose, treat and cure patients as never before.

Some were initially introduced years ago – for example, tongue depressors, syringes or stethoscopes – while others are of a more recent vintage – MRI machines, ventilators, artificial heart valves or hip and knee joints. Many diagnostic tools are things we now take for granted while others are more urgent and immediate, like the hundreds of millions of rapidly developed COVID-19 tests shipped to hospitals and pharmacies around the world over the past two years. Nanotechnology, genetic testing, artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted screenings, and ever-improving imaging advances are just a handful of examples of medical technologies that diagnose and treat patients quickly and efficiently – often detecting diseases much earlier, avoiding costly surgeries and keeping patients out of hospitals and allowing them to have a better quality of life by living with less pain, more independently and with more dignity.

technology community is poised to have an even greater impact on saving lives and driving New Jersey’s workforce and economy. Central to this dramatic progress is the continued collaboration and partnership between these innovative companies, New Jersey’s research universities and teaching hospitals, and our federal and state policymakers. A recent shining example is the upcoming New Jersey Innovation and Technology Hub in downtown New Brunswick, which will soon offer even greater ability for the medical technology community to collaborate with clinicians, academic institutions, research hospitals and other life sciences sectors on diagnosing, treating and curing diseases.

To keep New Jersey a national and global leader in medical technology, we urge all members of New Jersey’s Congressional Delegation to join the Congressional Medical Technology (Med-Tech) Caucus, and we look forward to working with them and our state elected officials to advance policies that support and strengthen the med tech community’s continued ability to thrive here in New Jersey.

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