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Association forms to promote region's biotech sector

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Hundreds of members of the New England biotechnology community are joining forces to advocate for public policies that encourage innovation in the field. The group will also focus on educating the public and news media about the importance of biotech in the six New England states.

The [New England Biotech Association](#), which held its first meeting Thursday in Cambridge, will lobby for continued access to medications and encourage economic development in the sector. The goal is to ensure that the region remains a global leader in biotechnology and the life sciences.

A year in the making, the association will be chaired by Paula Newton, president of the New Hampshire

[Bio/Medical Council](#). She said “by combining forces, all six states could present together at conferences, travel together on trade missions and work together to influence policy.”

When asked whether competition between the states for new biotech startups could create conflict, Nelson said, “We would rather keep new biotech companies in New England than see them move to California or North Carolina.”

[Massachusetts Biotechnology Council](#) President Bob Coughlin said his organization will provide expertise to other members, such as an industry group now forming in Vermont. One example of a common goal is to streamline permitting for new biotech companies.

“When it comes to policy issues we’re all on the same page,” Coughlin said.

The regional group hasn’t decided yet whether it will lobby in Washington, D.C., for common policy goals. The MBC currently employs its own lobbyists both in Massachusetts and in Washington, D.C.