

**For Immediate Release**  
**June 4, 2013**

**Contact: Abby Trotter**  
**615-242-8856**

**LAB LICENSE BILL WILL HELP GROW BIOTECH INDUSTRY IN TENNESSEE**  
**Updates to Regulatory Requirements Expands Job Opportunities for Tennessee**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – A bill passed in the Tennessee General Assembly and to be signed by Governor Haslam today will update Tennessee’s outdated medical laboratory licensing requirements. The passage of the law, set to be enacted July 1, is an opportunity for Tennessee to be a more attractive location for the life sciences, particularly in the fields of advanced diagnostics and personalized medicine.

“Our Jobs4TN strategy identifies healthcare as one of the eight key industry clusters in which the state has a competitive advantage,” Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam said. “This legislation will make our state an even better location for the expansion and relocation of diagnostic laboratories as we continue our work to make Tennessee the No. 1 location in the Southeast for high quality jobs.”

Both the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development and the Tennessee Department of Health were involved with the legislation.

The new policy is a win for workforce development in the life sciences industry, as it will allow highly specialized medical laboratories the flexibility they need to hire properly trained personnel to run advanced laboratory tests. Tennessee science graduates will see expanded job opportunities as more specialized laboratories are attracted to the state.

“Passage of this legislation will have a very positive impact on the advancement of the life science industry across Tennessee,” said Samuel Lynch, Chairman of Life Science Tennessee (LifeSciTN) and former CEO of BioMimetic Therapeutics. “The growth of jobs in our state has been hindered within the industry, and this new legislation puts Tennessee on a level playing field with other states for attracting these advanced medical diagnostic companies and the jobs they bring,” said Lynch.

Prior to the legislation Tennessee was one of the top 10 most restrictive states in the country for medical laboratory licensing. The Life Science Tennessee Workforce Development Committee issued a report last year finding that many Tennessee companies were suffering due to a national shortage of medical laboratory technicians (MLTs) and medical technologists (MTs). Through the committee’s work and interactions with members it became clear that the situation had been exacerbated due to state requirements to use MTs and MLTs in labs, even though personnel graduating with other scientific degrees are often times better trained and more experienced for these highly specialized laboratories.

The previous policy essentially required all Tennessee medical laboratories to employ either MLTs or MTs to meet regulatory requirements set by the state's medical laboratory review board. The skill set of MTs and MLTs, however, does not always match up with the skills needed in certain specialized laboratories.

"It has always been our goal to grow our company in Tennessee," said Garry Latimer, CEO of DiaTech Oncology, a clinical pathology laboratory offering personalized chemotherapy testing. "But state requirements prevented us from being able to hire employees with the skills to do the work. This policy change will make growing our business in Tennessee a reality," said Latimer.

Specialized laboratories, like DiaTech Oncology, are part of the growing field of advanced medical diagnostics and personalized medicine. Research centers in Tennessee will also benefit from the new regulation. Vanderbilt University, St. Jude, the University of Tennessee and other research centers will be able to commercialize and grow the specialized medical diagnostics that are currently in development.

The bill will be signed by the Governor in a ceremonial signing celebration on Tuesday, June 4 at 1:30 p.m. in Nashville's War Memorial Auditorium.

### **About Life Science Tennessee**

Life Science Tennessee is a statewide, non-profit, member organization whose mission is to advance and grow the life science industry in Tennessee through advocacy, partnerships and alignment with economic and workforce development.

Members include companies, universities, research institutions, government and economic development groups, and other industry associations involved in discovery and application of life sciences products and related services that improve the health and well-being of people throughout the world.

Life Science Tennessee conducts business and economic development activities; advocates on behalf of the industry; educates the public about the benefits of life sciences research and product development; and provides a network for the exchange of ideas, information and opportunities.

###