ELRIG
The Drug Discovery Community

Pfizer

DDN EXPLORING DRUG DISCOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT

Drug Discovery USA 2026

Emerging multifunctional small molecule and biologic approaches to drug difficult targets.

16-17 June 2026
Pfizer, Cambridge (MA)
USA

#DDUSA26

Drug Discovery USA 2026

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Welcome to Drug Discovery USA 2026

Over the past two decades, a broad array of innovative therapeutic modalities has emerged to address biological targets long considered "undruggable." Advances in chemical biology, protein engineering, high-throughput omics technologies, and computational approaches, including machine learning and artificial intelligence, have significantly expanded both our understanding of disease biology and the spectrum of targets that can be modulated pharmacologically. Multifunctional small molecules, such as molecular glues, targeted protein degraders, allosteric modulators, covalent binders, and macrocycles, now enable precise modulation of protein stability, localization, and activity, often through engagement of endogenous cellular pathways. In parallel, emerging biologic modalities, including engineered and multispecific antibodies, peptide scaffolds, nucleotide and RNA therapeutics, antibody–drug conjugates, and gene and cell therapies, offer complementary strategies to engage complex or transient target surfaces with high affinity and specificity. Collectively, these next-generation approaches extend beyond traditional small molecules, vaccines, and first-generation biologics, providing improved selectivity, reduced off-target effects, and new opportunities to modulate challenging target classes, including protein–protein interactions, intrinsically disordered proteins, and disease drivers at the DNA, RNA, and protein levels. As a result, they are reshaping early-stage drug discovery, expanding the druggable genome, and, in some cases, offering curative potential. Continued innovation in molecular design, delivery, and mechanistic understanding will be essential to fully realize this promise.

To highlight recent advances in these next-generation approaches, we have assembled a two-day agenda featuring an outstanding group of speakers who will address novel drug design and screening strategies, molecular glues and degraders, and larger-molecule modalities, including oligonucleotide therapeutics, antibody–drug conjugates, and in vivo cell therapies. Across both days, the program will also emphasize the growing role of AI and machine learning in molecular design, target identification, elucidation of disease mechanisms, and improvements in the speed and efficiency of discovery. The symposium is broadly organized around small-molecule approaches on Day 1 and large-molecule approaches on Day 2; however, the overarching theme of innovation to address traditionally difficult-to-drug targets, together with the application of computational and AI-enabled methods, will be woven throughout the program. We hope the meeting will foster thoughtful scientific discussion and catalyze new collaborations across industry, academia, and the nonprofit sector. On Day 1, we will also host a panel discussion focused on cross-industry partnerships and the identification of external innovation to drive pipeline impact. We are delighted to have you join us for these discussions.

Conference Directors

Aled Edwards
Structural Genomics Consortium

Marija Tadin-Strapps
Pfizer

Swarna Balasubramanian
AstraZeneca

Keynote Speakers

John Tallarico, Ph.D.
Global Head of Discovery Sciences,
Novartis Biomedical Research

John Tallarico leads Discovery Sciences at Novartis, a global multi-disciplinary team driving innovation at the frontiers of chemistry, biology, and data science. With over two decades of experience in early drug discovery, John has helped shape Novartis's approaches to bringing together novel biology insights, human genetics data, target discovery tools, phenotypic screening, and emerging therapeutic modalities to invent new medicines across all Novartis therapeutic areas. A former academic and biotech founder, he brings a deep scientific perspective to strategic collaborations that bridge science and business.

Andrew White
Co-Founder and CTO,
Edison Scientific

Andrew is Co-Founder and CTO at Edison, where he has led multiple AI for science projects including ChemCrow (first LLM agents in chemistry), ether0 (first reasoning model in a scientific domain), and paperqa (first superhuman literature agent). Andrew has been a professor and researcher in ML in chemistry, explainable AI, statistical mechanics, and chemical engineering, and has received numerous awards, including junior investigator awards from the NSF and NIH. Andrew is an active member of the scientific community as a peer reviewer for over 30 journals, multiple national and private grant awarding institutions.

Scientific track overviews

Small molecule & peptide drug screening and design approaches

Tuesday morning

Small molecule drug discovery is a multi-stage process that combines computational design and experimental screening to identify and optimize new therapeutic agents. Topics in this track will include structural biology, computational chemistry, DNA-encoded library (DEL) screening, and chemical biology approaches to validate mechanism and translate molecules toward in vivo studies.

Track Chair

Aled Edwards
SGC

Molecular glues and degraders

Tuesday afternoon

Molecular glues and degrader platforms represent transformative modalities in targeted protein degradation (TPD), leveraging endogenous cellular degradation pathways to eliminate disease-causing proteins, including historically “undruggable” targets. In contrast to conventional inhibitors that primarily suppress protein function, these approaches enable physical removal of the target protein from the cell. This session will highlight recent developments in molecular glue and degrader strategies.

Track Chair

Dafydd Owen
Pfizer

Large molecules

Wednesday morning

Large molecules encompass a broad range of complex structures, including monoclonal and multi-specific antibodies, therapeutic proteins, ADCs, and nucleic acids. This is a rapidly expanding area of precision medicine, targeting specific, complex diseases with high precision. The session will cover a range of topics across large molecule modalities.

Track Chair

Megan Ericson
AstraZeneca

AI in drug discovery

Wednesday aft ernoon

Artificial intelligence (AI), including large language models and generative AI, is transforming drug discovery. AI-driven methods are improving the speed and quality of drug development. This session will highlight AI applications across R&D pipeline, from target identification, molecular design and discovery through preclinical and clinical studies.

Track Chair

Karin Noy
Pfizer

Tuesday 16 June – Scientific Tracks

Conference Partner

Morning: Small molecule & peptide drug screening and design approaches

Afternoon: Molecular glues and degraders

Time	Title
09:00 - 09.05	ELRIG Welcome - Del Trezise (ELRIG)
09:05 - 09:10	Conference Welcome
09:10 - 09:15	Track Introduction - Small molecule & peptide drug screening and design approaches - Aled Edwards (SGC)
09:15 - 09:45	A Pocket-Guided Discovery Platform Targeting Regulatory Lipidation Pockets - Milenko Cicmil (Tasca Therapeutics)
09:45 - 10:15	Conference Partner - TDP-43 Therapeutics: Assays for Novel Modality Discovery in ALS/FTD - Daniela Crespi (Axxam)
10:15 - 11:00	Refreshment Break
11:00 - 11:30	Beyond Small Molecules and Biologics: Realizing the Full Promise of Peptide Therapeutics - Yan Degenhardt (Syneron Bio)
11:30 - 11:35	Technology Spotlight - Araceli
11:35 - 11:40	Technology Spotlight - bit.bio
11:40 - 12:10	From algorithms to the bench: AI-powered drug discovery for hard-to-drug proteins in cancer - Igor Stagljar (University Of Toronto)
12:10 - 13:30	Refreshment Break
13:30 - 14:15	Keynote Presentation - Chemical Biology for Precision Medicines - John Tallarico (Novartis Biomedical Research)
14:15 - 14:20	Track Introduction - Molecular glues and degraders - Dafydd Owen (Pfizer)
14:20 - 14:50	Discovery of a molecular glue degrader of oncogenic ALK fusion proteins - Tim Wigle (Triana Biomedicines)
14:50 - 14:55	Technology Spotlight - Maxcyte
14:55 - 15:10	Industry Insider - SPT Labtech
15:10 - 15:40	Lauren Albrecht
15:40 - 16:15	Refreshment Break
16:15 - 16:45	Advances in the systematic discovery of molecular glue degraders - Eric Fischer (Dana-farber Cancer Institute)
16:45 - 17:30	Panel - Tapping into External Innovation: Powering Discovery Through Academia–Biopharma–Industry Partnerships - Ari Nowacek (ARCH Venture Partners), Leslie Cousens (Takeda), Christopher O'Donnell (Pfizer Inc.), Brittany de kouchkovsky (OUP - Osage University Partners)
17:30 - 19:00	Networking - Session sponsored by Capgemini

Wednesday 17 June – Scientific Tracks

Conference Partner

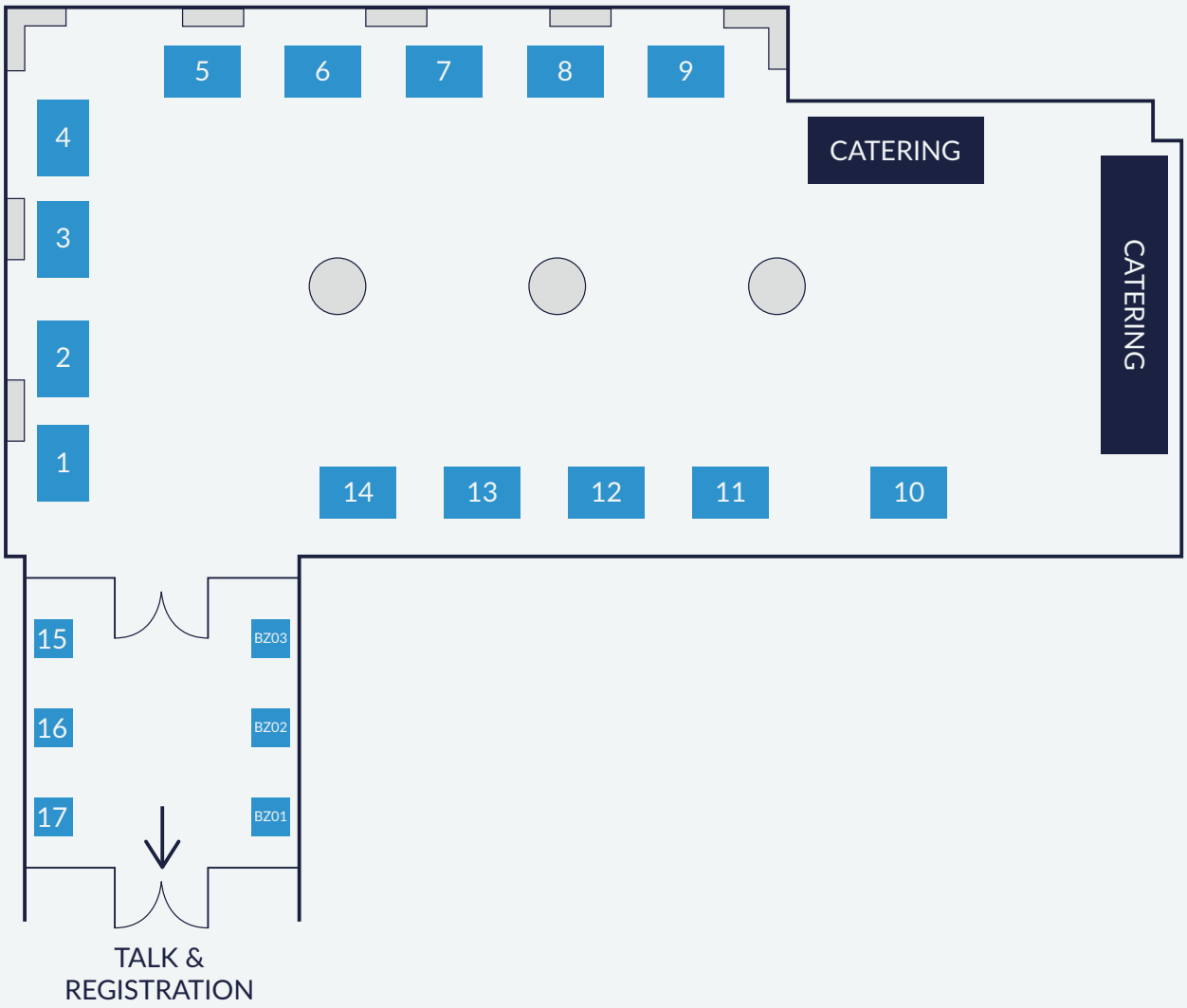
Capgemini

Morning: Large molecules

Afternoon: AI in drug discovery

Time	Title
09:00 - 09:10	Conference Welcome & Keynote Introduction
09:10 - 09:55	Keynote Presentation - Training reasoning models and agents for drug discovery - Andrew White (Edison Scientific)
09:55 - 10:25	Conference Partner - Capgemini
10:25 - 11:00	Refreshment Break
11:00 - 11:05	Track Introduction - Large molecules - Megan Ericson (AstraZeneca)
11:05 - 11:35	Expanding the reach of RNAi: novel RNAi triggers and targeted extrahepatic delivery - Tracy Zimmermann (City Therapeutics)
11:35 - 12:05	The Past, Present, and Future of Antibody Drug Conjugates - Peter Senter (Atida Bio)
12:05 - 12:10	Technology Spotlight - Miltenyi
12:20 - 12:15	Comfort Break
12:15 - 12:30	Industry Insider - Fusion Antibodies
12:30 - 13:00	NATEVE™: A Function-First Platform for Discovery and Engineering of Best-in-Class ADCC Antibodies - Nikola Ivica (Inndura Therapeutics Inc.)
13:00 - 13:30	Engineering trispecific anti-cytokine antibodies for inflammation and atopic disease - Laird Bloom (Pfizer Inc.)
13:30 - 13:35	Technology Spotlight - Synthace
13:35 - 14:45	Refreshment Break
14:45 - 14:50	Track Introduction - AI in drug discovery - Karin Noy (Pfizer)
14:50 - 15:20	From DREAM to BEACON, forging transparent AI-driven scientific discovery through benchmarking challenges - Pablo Meyer (IBM)
15:20 - 15:50	Boltz: Towards Accurate Biomolecular Modeling and Design - Gabriele Corso (Boltz)
15:50 - 16:20	Successful hit-finding computational workflows from CACHE challenges - Matthieu Schapira (Structural Genomics Consortium)

Floorplan



Exhibitors

Abzena
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Ambergen
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Araceli Biosciences
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Axol Bioscience
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Bit.Bio
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BrainXell
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PhaSER Biomedical Ltd
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BZ01

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Information for Participants

ELRIG Mobile App

Download the free ELRIG app and access all our conference information, programme and more from your phone or tablet.

- View the event programme
- View presentation and poster abstracts
- View speaker profiles
- View the exhibitor guide
- View the delegate and exhibitor list
- Organise your day with your own favourites list
- Share your profile as vCard and QR Code and scan exhibitor QR code information tags
- Network – contact delegates, other exhibitors and speakers easily through opt-in directories and integration with LinkedIn, X and Facebook.

Download our App… search for and install The Event App by EventsAir onto your mobile device, then use the Event App Code: DDUSA26. For convenience, you can add the app to your device's home screen.

Wi-Fi

Guest Wi-Fi is available, but some websites (e.g., Gmail, Google Drive) are restricted due to Pfizer's secure network. Guests can use personal hotspots, though reliability isn't guaranteed.

Wellbeing Room

A Wellbeing Room is available ask a member of the team on site and they will direct you.

Accessibility

Please ask a member of the ELRIG team or security for directions to the disabled and changing facilities.

Conference Code of Conduct

To help keep a safe space, we require the following from all attendees:

Pre-registration for the meeting is essential. At ELRIG we want all our meeting participants to enjoy, participate in and contribute to the event.

ELRIG does not accept harassment or intimidation of ELRIG participants in any form whether verbal, physical, or written (including on social media or by email).

Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

1. Offensive or unwanted conduct on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation which has the purpose or effect of violating dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile or degrading environment.
2. Use of sexualised or other inappropriate images or unwelcome sexualised content, inappropriate physical contact, unwelcome sexual attention or stalking.
3. Sustained interruption of speakers or those asking questions.
4. Unwanted photography or filming.

Intimidation includes, but is not limited to:

1. Making threats.
2. Bullying.
3. Personal attacks.

Participants who do not adhere to these rules will be asked to stop and expected to comply immediately. Participants may be removed from any meeting at the discretion of ELRIG's management. If you are being harassed/intimidated, notice that someone else is being harassed/intimidated, or have any other concerns, please contact any of the ELRIG management team immediately. They will be able to step in to remove you or others from a chain of communication, if this is the preferred action, and can also facilitate a discussion or mediation. If you wish, you may also nominate someone else to support facilitating any mediation or as an observer to this process.

About ELRIG

Who we are

ELRIG is a world-leading, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to advancing the drug discovery community. Our mission is to promote open access to cutting-edge research and innovation by connecting life science professionals through inclusive, free-to-attend scientific conferences and networking events.

With a dynamic community of over 25,000 members, we provide a platform for learning, collaboration, and progress on the most pressing challenges in life sciences. We are passionate about fostering diversity, inclusion, and accessibility—ensuring our events reflect a wide range of global perspectives and experiences that inspire scientific discovery and drive the industry forward.

ELRIG's Vision

To be the premier champion and enabler of an open, connected, diverse, and sustainable drug discovery and life science community.

Strategic Pillars

Enable drug discovery by improved connections between stakeholders, through an extended, sustainable, and ongoing program of best-in-class, open-access, science-based events and digital products.

Amplify scientific innovation, sector impact, and professional development by championing great science and people through platforms, recognition, and awards.

Demonstrate sector leadership in best practice for sustainability, inclusivity, representation, equality, and diversity for our teams, delegates, and target patient cohorts.

Corporate Sponsors

AstraZeneca

GSK

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2026 Events

JULY

ELRIG Summer Social: The 2027 Launch
1 July | Cambridge, UK

SEPTEMBER

Discovering Precision Medicines
ELRIG's Irish Forum
3 Sept | Belfast, UK

Beyond the Gap: Advancing Drug Discovery in Women's Health Research
ELRIG Forum
15 Sept | Edinburgh, UK

OCTOBER

Drug Discovery 2026
ELRIG Conference
14-15 Oct | London, UK

NOVEMBER

Next Gen Omics & Imaging: Single Cell And Spatial Biology
ELRIG Forum
3 Nov | Paris, France

Protein Sciences In Drug Discovery 2026
ELRIG Conference
10-11 Nov | Stevenage, UK

DECEMBER

Meet Up
ELRIG SLAS Networking
9 Dec | London, UK

Join our LinkedIn Group

ELRIG: The Drug Discovery Community

Our community consists of scientists, researchers, engineers, thought-leaders, and commercial people across drug discovery.