Keys to Rebuilding Trust in Science and Other Takeaways from BIO

By Silvia Taylor, Executive Vice President, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer and Head of Novavax Sweden

Public health has a proud legacy of keeping people safe through life-saving science. Yet over the years, that legacy has been tested as pandemic-era innovation, healthcare politics and an accelerated information ecosystem have all put pressure on public trust. But I see this moment as an opportunity: vaccines remain one of our most powerful tools for keeping people healthy, and restoring confidence in them is a challenge our industry is well positioned to meet

At the 2026 BIO International Convention, I joined a panel of biotechnology, healthcare advocacy and government leaders to discuss solutions. Here are some highlights from our discussion, and my own take on what industry has learned:

- **Increased transparency builds trust**: Novavax is proud to have brought one of only three U.S. vaccine options to market during the COVID-19 pandemic –an incredibly challenging time that meant learning how to navigate an evolving healthcare landscape while remaining transparent.

  I've spent nearly 30 years in this industry, and there was a time I would never have imagined putting out data before it went through peer review. But during the pandemic, the pace of science meant we sometimes published on preprint servers while studies progressed through traditional peer review. Through this, we learned we needed better ways to explain, in real time, what we knew, what we didn't yet know and how evidence was still evolving.

  Trust grows when institutions are upfront about uncertainty instead of talking down to people, and when information is provided in a consistent, non-political way. For a science-based organization like Novavax, that means equipping providers, policymakers and community partners with real-world data, so their own conversations are grounded in evidence people can actually verify.

- **We must commit to finding common ground**: Communications can't be a one-way street – the goal isn't to repeat our message louder, but to understand people's questions and doubts so we can meet them with information that's relevant, understandable and useful.

  The stakes extend beyond individual health outcomes. A recent report by the National Association of Manufacturers found that declining MMR vaccination rates cost U.S. manufacturers an estimated $275 million annually in missed workdays, lost caregiver hours and reduced productivity.

  So how do we go about finding this common ground? For some, personal choice and medical freedom are fundamental to healthcare decisions – values that aren't at odds with scientific rigor or innovation. At Novavax, we believe expanding vaccine options strengthens confidence by addressing patients' diverse needs and preferences. Choice gives people agency, and agency builds confidence in the decisions people make themselves and their families.

  That same commitment extends to policymakers: shared, enduring priorities – health resilience, national security, workforce readiness and U.S. leadership in scientific innovation – open the door to more constructive dialogue and more durable policy solutions.

  This takes a village: panels like this one — bringing together industry, healthcare advocacy and government — exist because no single sector can rebuild trust alone. Industry can convene the right partners and push for the consistency and coordination stakeholders need; without it, well-intentioned but conflicting guidance leaves people unsure of who to believe.

- **We must include new voices to reach people where they get their health information**. We know that people don't necessarily trust industry; it's their own healthcare providers, the nurses and pharmacists, who will always be the most trusted voices. That means working more closely with providers, pharmacists, academic institutions, patient advocates and community organizations so science is communicated by credible, trusted intermediaries. This extends beyond traditional healthcare channels, and must also include faith leaders, local organizations, family members and other community voices.

  Importantly, in today's world, this includes embracing the growing role of social media and AI in healthcare decision-making. As people increasingly turn to AI-powered tools as a first stop for health information, we can no longer rely on traditional channels alone. Credible, evidence-based content must be available and in formats both people and technology can find and understand.

  Facts and data remain essential, but they're not always enough. We must also elevate the stories of individuals and families affected by vaccine-preventable diseases. Combining evidence with human experiences makes science more relatable and builds stronger connections with the communities we serve.

Rebuilding trust will take everything this panel discussed. It's not about defending the science more loudly, but a thoughtful approach to build transparency, finding common ground across the healthcare ecosystem, equipping trusted messengers with real evidence, and meeting people wherever they turn for answers – from their pharmacists to their phones. At Novavax, that commitment guides how we innovate and collaborate to tackle the world's most significant health challenges, and it's the work I'm proud to carry forward with the BIO Board of Directors.

Thank you to my fellow panelists – **Rebecca Alvania**, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases; **Deborah Glasser**, Head, Specialty Care, North America, and U.S. Country Lead at Sanofi and BIO Trust in Science Working Group member; **Debra Houry**, Principal at DH Leadership and Strategy Solutions and former Chief Medical Officer and Deputy Director for Program and Science at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; our moderator **Phyllis Arthur**, Executive Vice President & Chief of Global Health at BIO; the BIO team and everyone who attended our panel *When Science Takes a Trust Fall: Rebuilding Confidence to Support Continued Innovation*. Together, we can help rebuild trust in science and institutions as we work toward the next generation of vaccines and immuno-therapeutics.