

April 26, 2024

The Pharmaceutical Industry Labor-Management Association (PILMA) is proud to join stakeholders from across the biopharmaceutical and labor communities in recognizing World Intellectual Property Day. Today is an opportunity to reflect on the pivotal role of intellectual property (IP) rights in not only powering innovation and the development of new cures, but in creating and sustaining high-quality, skilled union jobs. Many of the high-tech, state-of-the-art facilities where lifesaving medicines are developed and manufactured are built with union labor. According to independent estimates, the American biopharmaceutical sector supported over [22 million union labor hours and paid nearly \\$800 billion](#) in wages from 2015-2020.

The importance of IP was starkly evident in the rapid development and global deployment of COVID-19 vaccines and therapies during the pandemic, achieved through unprecedented industry collaboration with skilled labor. Today, thanks to robust IP protections, the United States continues to be a bastion of innovation and a world leader in the development of new therapies – treating everything from common chronic diseases to rare genetic conditions.

Today is also a reminder that we must continue to ensure IP rights are protected from misguided attempts by policymakers to weaken them under the guise of promoting access and affordability to medicines. Recent proposals to invoke so-called “march-in rights” on drug patents and the ongoing effort at the World Trade Organization to expand its IP waiver to COVID-19 diagnostics and therapeutics would have a chilling effect on R&D investment in the biopharma sector, ultimately eliminating union construction work supported by this industry. All the while, such policies would do little to expand access to these therapies in underserved areas.

On this World IP Day, let’s recommit to our mission of promoting a vibrant biopharmaceutical industry while working to find durable solutions that balance patient access to essential medicines with preserving the IP rights that enable innovation to thrive.