Profiles of Global Pharmaceutical Industry Leaders

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Top 10 Global Thought Leaders in Pharma: Key Speakers and Influencers

Introduction: This report profiles ten of the most prominent public speakers and thought leaders in the pharmaceutical industry today. These individuals – spanning industry executives, pioneering scientists, regulatory leaders, and health advocates – are shaping conversations around drug development, innovation, policy, and patient outcomes. Each section below details a leader's professional background, their common speaking topics, notable speaking engagements, and highlights of their influence on the pharma and biotech field. Relevant quotes and citations are provided to illustrate their messages and impact.

1. Albert Bourla – CEO of Pfizer

Albert Bourla, Pfizer's CEO, speaking at a biotech summit in 2023. **Background:** Dr. Albert Bourla has over 30 years of experience at Pfizer, rising through R&D and commercial roles to become CEO in 2019 tdg.ucla.edu. He led Pfizer during the COVID-19 pandemic, overseeing the rapid development of the Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA vaccine. Bourla's leadership and collaboration with BioNTech's team (under Dr. Uğur Şahin) resulted in one of the first globally authorized COVID vaccines, a milestone for which he and BioNTech's founders received recognition such as the Atlantic Council's Distinguished Business Leadership Award atlanticcouncil.org atlanticcouncil.org.

Speaking Topics: As a speaker, Bourla often emphasizes innovation through partnership, scientific collaboration, and global health equity. He has highlighted that the toughest healthcare challenges "require world-class collaboration to fuel game-changing innovation," especially between big pharma and biotech startups tdg.ucla.edu. Bourla also speaks about lessons from the pandemic – from combating vaccine misinformation to improving global access. For instance, at the 2022 World Economic Forum, he underscored improving affordability of medicines, clarifying Pfizer's goal "to cut the number of people who couldn't afford Pfizer's medicines by 50%" reuters.com. In a 2023 APEC CEO Summit address, he urged business leaders to help "cure" the "epidemic of exclusion" – be it economic, social or personal exclusion – through inclusive culture and partnerships linkedin.com pharmadispatch.com. This theme of **business responsibility in public health** resonates in his speeches.

Notable Engagements: Bourla is a sought-after keynote speaker at major industry and policy forums. He has delivered keynotes at events like the **APEC CEO Summit 2023** and the **Los Angeles Bioscience Ecosystem Summit (LABEST) 2023** tdg.ucla.edu. He also frequently appears in high-profile interviews (e.g. *Face the Nation*, Davos panels) to discuss the future of vaccines and pandemic preparedness. In one interview, he reflected on Pfizer's pandemic

approach: *"We decided to provide | [the vaccine] at no profit, because our top priority was to protect global health"* bbc.com – emphasizing ethics over earnings during a crisis.

Influence: Under Bourla's leadership, Pfizer not only delivered a historic vaccine but also launched initiatives to improve global health equity (such as pledging to supply medicines to poorer countries). His messages about partnership and inclusion position him as a **thought leader championing collaborative innovation**. Bourla's optimistic vision – that with science and solidarity "we can cure the ills" plaguing society linkedin.com – continues to inspire audiences across the pharma industry and beyond.

> **Notable Quote:** "Exclusion is an epidemic. Business must be a part of the cure. And like any new medicine, this cure requires purposeful partnerships to develop." pharmadispatch.com

2. Stéphane Bancel – CEO of Moderna

Stéphane Bancel, CEO of Moderna, speaking on the biotech industry's future. **Background:** Stéphane Bancel has served as CEO of Moderna since 2011, transforming a small startup into a leading mRNA biotech. Under his leadership, Moderna developed a breakthrough COVID-19 vaccine in 2020, validating mRNA vaccine technology aaespeakers.com. Bancel's background includes prior executive roles at BioMérieux and Eli Lilly, and he is also a partner at the venture firm Flagship Pioneering aaespeakers.com aaespeakers.com. His experience straddles pharma, diagnostics, and biotechnology, giving him broad perspective on healthcare innovation.

Speaking Topics: Bancel is known for his **enthusiasm about mRNA technology and the future of vaccine development**. In public forums, he often discusses how mRNA can be applied beyond COVID-19 – for flu, RSV, cancer therapies, etc. – and how Moderna is "much more than a COVID company." For example, he has highlighted that Moderna's pipeline spans vaccines for multiple diseases and even personalized cancer vaccines science.org. Bancel also addresses the challenges of scaling innovation: at industry conferences like JPMorgan Healthcare and **SXSW**, he has spoken about **Moderna's journey from a novel idea to a commercial powerhouse**, and the need to maintain scientific agility even as the company grows forbes.com. Another key topic is **pandemic preparedness and equitable vaccine access**. In early 2023, Bancel testified to the U.S. Senate to explain Moderna's COVID vaccine pricing, where he noted factors like loss of economies of scale and projected a 90% drop in demand post-pandemic reuters.com. This reflects his engagement in discussions on vaccine economics and policy.

Notable Engagements: Bancel has become a fixture on the global speaking circuit. He has been a featured keynote speaker at major events including **South by Southwest (SXSW)**, the **J.P. Morgan Healthcare Conference**, the HLTH conference, and the Milken Institute's Future of Health Summit forbes.com. In these venues, he shares insights on biotech innovation and leadership. He also delivered a **commencement address in 2023** at the University of Minnesota, where he stressed making the world a better place through science. *"I care deeply about making the world a better place… helping people and their loved ones to prevent*

diseases, to diagnose diseases and to treat diseases," Bancel told graduates, underscoring a mission-driven approach to pharmaceutical innovation modernatx.com.

Influence: As the head of one of the foremost mRNA companies, Bancel is a **voice of authority on vaccine technology and biotech entrepreneurship**. He has navigated Moderna through explosive growth and public scrutiny, and his speeches often blend technical vision with leadership philosophy. Bancel's advocacy for continual learning and collaboration in science is exemplified by his own story – from a "kid from Marseille" to a CEO overseeing life-saving vaccines modernatx.com. By articulating the promise of mRNA and the importance of bold investment in R&D, he influences both industry peers and public policy debates on pandemic response.

> **Notable Quote:** "We've been expecting a 90% reduction in demand... As you can see, we're losing economies of scale." reuters.com (Explaining the post-pandemic vaccine market and Moderna's pricing considerations.)

3. Pascal Soriot – CEO of AstraZeneca

Background: Sir Pascal Soriot has been Chief Executive Officer of AstraZeneca since 2012, steering the UK-based pharma giant through a remarkable period of innovation and growth. A veterinarian-turned-executive, Soriot previously held top posts at Roche and Genentech. At AstraZeneca, he refocused the company on cutting-edge science (especially in oncology and immunotherapy) and famously partnered with Oxford University in 2020 to develop a widely distributed COVID-19 vaccine. Soriot was knighted in 2022 for services to life sciences, highlighting his contributions to the industry astrazeneca.com.

Speaking Topics: Pascal Soriot speaks frequently about **global health responsibility, scientific collaboration, and sustainability** in pharma. During the pandemic, he took a principled stand to distribute AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine on a not-for-profit basis during the emergency. *"We decided to provide it at no profit, because our top priority was to protect global health,"* Soriot has explained bbc.com. He often addresses **equitable access to medicines**, citing AstraZeneca's tiered pricing and extensive supply to low-income countries (over 250 million doses to COVAX by end of 2021) bbc.com bbc.com. Beyond the pandemic, Soriot's speeches emphasize **innovation through partnership** – for example, how academia-industry collaborations (like AZ's with Oxford) can accelerate R&D. He also acknowledges challenges such as climate change: calling it "the biggest threat against humanity," he has advocated industry action on sustainability while developing new medicines astrazeneca.com. Internally, Soriot champions a science-driven culture, pushing AstraZeneca to "follow the science" in pursuing novel drug targets and technologies.

Notable Engagements: Soriot engages with both policy makers and scientific audiences. He has spoken at the **World Economic Forum** and high-level climate forums, underlining that pharma must be part of global solutions (from pandemics to climate-related health threats). He

frequently participates in investor conferences and scientific symposia to discuss AstraZeneca's pipeline progress and industry trends. During the height of COVID-19, Soriot gave numerous press briefings to clarify vaccine data and combat misinformation – at one press conference he firmly stated there was "no indication" that the AZ vaccine caused certain side effects, reinforcing public trust pub-ace-single-page-app.vir.onservo.com. His candid reflections on the vaccine rollout – *"I absolutely don't regret it…we're proud as a company of the impact we have had"* bbc.com – highlight his focus on long-term reputation over short-term profit.

Influence: Pascal Soriot is widely regarded as a **leader who balanced scientific innovation with a public-health conscience**. Under his tenure, AstraZeneca revitalized its R&D engine and also saved millions of lives with a globally accessible COVID vaccine. His public stance on affordable vaccines arguably pressured other companies to consider access, and earned AstraZeneca a different public image during the crisis bbc.com bbc.com. Soriot's voice carries significant weight in industry discussions on **ethical leadership, the value of research, and preparedness for future health challenges**. He continues to influence both the strategic direction of big pharma and its social responsibilities in an ever-changing healthcare landscape.

> **Notable Quote:** "We decided to do it at no profit… Despite the criticism, I absolutely don't regret it. We've saved millions of hospitalisations. The team continues to do a stellar job." bbc.com

4. Dame Emma Walmsley – CEO of GSK

Background: Dame Emma Walmsley has been Chief Executive Officer of GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) since 2017, and is notably the first woman to lead a top-10 global pharmaceutical company instagram.com. With a background in consumer products and pharmaceuticals, Walmsley has led GSK through a strategic refocus on biopharma innovation, including spinning off its consumer health division. She has championed investments in vaccines (e.g. the world's first approved malaria vaccine and a new RSV vaccine) and in emerging technologies like artificial intelligence to boost drug discovery business.columbia.edu business.columbia.edu. Walmsley was made Dame (DBE) in 2020 for services to the pharmaceutical industry aaespeakers.com.

Speaking Topics: Emma Walmsley frequently addresses **innovation, health access, and the intersection of technology and healthcare**. In interviews and forums, she underscores the paradox that *"We've extended our lifespan, but not our healthspan,"* calling for more focus on healthy life years business.columbia.edu. A strong advocate of prevention, Walmsley often highlights the high return on investment in vaccines: *"There is no better return on investment in healthcare than vaccination, apart from clean water,"* she noted, emphasizing vaccines' role in reducing healthcare costs and improving productivity business.columbia.edu. She is also bullish on **digital and data science in pharma** – Walmsley has described how GSK is leveraging AI/machine learning to accelerate R&D (from target identification to clinical trial design) business.columbia.edu business.columbia.edu. At a Columbia University event in 2023, she

detailed how new tech platforms like mRNA, gene therapy, and AI are "making waves" in developing treatments for previously untreatable diseases business.columbia.edu. As a leader, Walmsley addresses **cultural change and diversity** too: she often speaks about empowering talent and has become a role model for women in STEM leadership.

Notable Engagements: Walmsley is a familiar presence at global business forums and academic venues alike. She has spoken at the **FT Global Pharma and Biotech Summit**, the **World Economic Forum**, and was featured in Columbia Business School's Distinguished Speaker Series business.columbia.edu x.com. In these talks, she shares strategic insights on the pharma landscape – for example, discussing how incentives in healthcare need realignment toward prevention and outcomes business.columbia.edu. Walmsley also engages in public dialogues on **health policy**; for instance, she has discussed pricing and innovation incentives in the U.S. market, noting that while the U.S. spends trillions on healthcare, better incentives are needed to keep people healthy business.columbia.edu business.columbia.edu. Internally, she regularly addresses GSK's workforce and investors about building a pipeline in oncology and infectious disease, often framing it in terms of long-term *"innovation over the quarter"* mindset.

Influence: As one of the few female CEOs in biopharma, Emma Walmsley's impact extends beyond her company. She has **reframed GSK's strategy around science and tech**, investing in areas like AI partnerships and genetic research. Her public commentary on vaccines and health equity has reinforced the industry's focus on prevention as well as treatment. Moreover, Walmsley's leadership style – promoting a culture of inclusion and adaptability – is frequently referenced in case studies of modern pharma management. By articulating the need to marry **cutting-edge technology with human health needs**, she influences both industry peers and public expectations of pharma's role in society.

> **Notable Quote:** "It's better for everybody to stop the disease… There is no better return on investment in healthcare than vaccination, apart from clean water." business.columbia.edu

5. Vas Narasimhan – CEO of Novartis

Vas Narasimhan, Novartis CEO, discussing AI's role in drug development. **Background:** Dr. Vasant "Vas" Narasimhan, a physician by training, has been the Chief Executive Officer of Novartis since 2018 novartis.com. He has steered Novartis to reinvent itself as a "medicines company powered by data and digital," reflecting his strong emphasis on technological transformation. Narasimhan joined Novartis in 2005 and held roles in development and strategy, including Global Head of Drug Development. As CEO, he has led initiatives in cell/gene therapies, launched an "AI innovation lab" in partnership with tech firms, and fostered a culture he calls "unbossed" – empowering teams and flattening hierarchy to spur innovation.

Speaking Topics: Vas Narasimhan is a prominent voice on **digital innovation, AI in healthcare, advanced therapies, and leadership in pharma**. He often discusses how emerging technologies will **reshape drug discovery and development**. *"There's no question that AI is*

going to reshape… the healthcare industry," he noted, explaining that AI can make research and operations "much more efficient, much more productive and unlock resources… to find new medicines \ [and] deliver those medicines better" linkedin.com. At venues like the World Economic Forum and JPMorgan conferences, Narasimhan has shared his vision of AI accelerating clinical trials, improving diagnostic accuracy, and personalizing treatments linkedin.com linkedin.com. In addition, he speaks about **next-generation platforms** (such as cell/gene therapy and RNA therapeutics), highlighting that we are seeing an explosion of biotech innovation "that will have a lasting impact" on disease management linkedin.com. Another recurring theme is **climate change and global health** – Narasimhan is one of few pharma CEOs to link climate to health outcomes, warning that changing climates can spread diseases and stressing cross-sector efforts to prepare healthcare systems linkedin.com. As a leader, he also shares insights on organizational culture, often citing how leadership and talent development are crucial in navigating a rapidly changing industry.

Notable Engagements: Narasimhan regularly contributes at high-profile forums. He has been featured in **WEF Davos panels** on healthcare, **Fortune's Brainstorm Health**, and tech-focused events where he delves into AI's potential. In a 2024 LinkedIn video address, he identified the "most dominant emerging topics" for pharma – from AI to climate change – inviting discussion on how to prepare for these trends linkedin.com linkedin.com. He also keynoted the **World Medical Innovation Forum 2024** and similar conferences, where his talks spanned from the role of big data in medicine to the ethical deployment of AI finance.yahoo.com forbes.com. Internally, he is known for hosting global townhalls and a podcast sharing Novartis's innovation stories, thus engaging a wide audience in the company's mission to "reimagine medicine."

Influence: As a relatively young CEO with a tech-forward agenda, Vas Narasimhan has become an **industry thought leader on the intersection of healthcare and technology**. He has mobilized one of the world's largest pharma companies to invest deeply in digital capabilities, influencing peers to do the same. His advocacy for using AI and data to accelerate cures – while also stressing partnership and responsible leadership – strikes a balance that resonates across sectors. Furthermore, Narasimhan's global outlook (he often references health needs in both developed and emerging markets) and his vocal stance on issues like climate-health interlinkages position him as a progressive voice. Through his speeches and writings, he's effectively **pushing pharma to embrace innovation not just scientifically but also socially**, preparing the industry for a future of broader accountability and impact linkedin.com linkedin.com.

> **Notable Quote:** "AI can make us much more efficient, much more productive and unlock resources… to find new medicines, deliver those medicines better and ultimately impact healthcare positively." linkedin.com

6. Uğur Şahin – CEO of BioNTech

Background: Prof. Uğur Şahin is the co-founder and CEO of BioNTech, and a physician-scientist known for his work in immunotherapy and vaccines. Şahin and his wife Dr. Özlem Türeci founded BioNTech in 2008 with the aim of developing personalized cancer therapies. Pre-pandemic, his team was already pioneering mRNA-based cancer vaccines. In 2020, Şahin initiated **"Project Lightspeed"**, pivoting BioNTech's mRNA platform to develop a COVID-19 vaccine in record time pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov. The success of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine turned Şahin into one of the world's most influential biotech leaders. He has received numerous accolades, and with Türeci was named among *Time*'s 100 Most Influential People for their vaccine work.

Speaking Topics: Uğur Şahin is somewhat soft-spoken, but when he speaks publicly it is often about **the frontier of medical science – especially mRNA technology – and its potential to fight diseases like cancer**. He is passionate about the idea that the mRNA vaccine approach used for COVID-19 can be *"repurposed so that it primes the immune system to attack cancer cells"* theguardian.com. In interviews, Şahin expresses optimism that **cancer vaccines could become a reality by the end of this decade**, predicting they could be available *"before 2030"* theguardian.com. He frequently explains the science in accessible terms: how mRNA vaccines work like "wanted posters" training the immune system theguardian.com, and how similar principles apply to identifying tumor antigens. Another focus area is **scientific collaboration and speed**. Şahin often credits the global partnership (with Pfizer and others) that enabled their COVID vaccine to succeed so fast atlanticcouncil.org. He advocates maintaining that collaborative spirit for other global health problems. Additionally, Şahin speaks about **pandemic preparedness** and the need for rapid-response platforms; he has engaged in discussions with governments on how to respond even faster to future outbreaks by leveraging mRNA and other technologies investors.biontech.de.

Notable Engagements: Though not a frequent presence on the generic speakers' circuit, Şahin has delivered keynotes at major scientific conferences. In 2023, he was a **closing plenary speaker at the International mRNA Health Conference**, alongside Nobel laureates Karikó and Weissman mrnaconferenceszeged.hu. He has presented at the **J.P. Morgan Healthcare Conference** (2024) to outline BioNTech's strategic vision investors.biontech.de, a significant industry event. Şahin and Türeci also gave a high-profile joint interview on **BBC's Laura Kuenssberg show** in late 2022, where they discussed their work on cancer vaccines in depth theguardian.com. Moreover, Şahin engages with policymakers: for instance, he visited the World Health Summit and other forums to promote equitable vaccine distribution and to strengthen academia-industry ties in biomedical research atlanticcouncil.org. Despite English not being his first language, he has effectively communicated complex science to broad audiences during press briefings in the pandemic, reassuring the public about vaccine efficacy and variant responses reuters.com.

Influence: Uğur Şahin's influence is profound in both the scientific and business realms. As a **scientist-entrepreneur**, he exemplifies how cutting-edge research can directly translate into life-saving products. His talks often inspire other researchers by showing that decades of work (in his case on mRNA since the 1990s) can lead to overnight success – an "overnight" built on

persistence. Şahin's emphasis on **using mRNA against cancer** has galvanized investment and research in that field; his timelines (e.g. a cancer vaccine by 2030) set ambitious goals that others are now chasing theguardian.com. Additionally, through his collaborative approach – partnering with a pharma giant while maintaining BioNTech's innovative culture – he has influenced how large and small companies can work together. Şahin remains a guiding voice on the future of vaccines, regularly reinforcing the message that what was achieved for COVID can be a blueprint for tackling other diseases with equal urgency and ingenuity.

> **Notable Quote:** "Asked when cancer vaccines based on mRNA might be ready… Prof Şahin said they could be available 'before 2030.'" theguardian.com

7. Katalin Karikó – mRNA Pioneer, Nobel Laureate

Background: Dr. Katalin Karikó is a biochemist whose relentless work over decades laid the foundation for mRNA therapeutics. A Hungarian-born scientist, Karikó spent much of her career at the University of Pennsylvania researching mRNA delivery. Despite setbacks and lack of funding (famously, she was once demoted at Penn), she persisted in refining the idea that mRNA could be engineered as a drug or vaccine. Her collaboration with Dr. Drew Weissman led to a 2005 breakthrough – modifying mRNA to avoid inflammatory reactions – a discovery crucial to mRNA vaccine success bu.edu frontiersofknowledgeawards-fbbva.es. In 2023, Karikó and Weissman were awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine for this work. She is now an adjunct professor at University of Szeged and was previously a senior VP at BioNTech.

Speaking Topics: Katalin Karikó's personal journey has made her an icon of **scientific perseverance and innovation**. In talks and interviews, she often shares her story to encourage young scientists. *"Persistence can pay off, in the end,"* she affirmed, reflecting on her career's lesson nobelprize.org. A key theme is **overcoming obstacles in research** – Karikó emphasizes focusing on what one can change and not being discouraged by others' success or skepticism nobelprize.org nobelprize.org. She also speaks about **work-life balance in science**, encouraging women researchers that one "doesn't have to choose between having a family and a career," noting how her own daughter watched her work hard and was inspired to high achievement nobelprize.org nobelprize.org. On the scientific front, Karikó explains the significance of mRNA technology in simple terms, recounting how incremental improvements ("sometimes incremental increase, sometimes big jump") led to "optimal RNA suitable for therapy" facebook.com. She highlights the collaborative nature of breakthroughs – for example, in her Nobel Banquet speech she thanked the many colleagues whose work "built the foundation" for the mRNA vaccines nobelprize.org. Her humility and emphasis on team science are notable in her public remarks.

Notable Engagements: Post-Nobel, Karikó has been in high demand as a speaker. She delivered a formal **Nobel Lecture in December 2023** (detailing the science of nucleoside-modified mRNA) and spoke at the Nobel Banquet, where her warmth and humor shone (she

corrected a popular anecdote about wrestling over a photocopier with Weissman) nobelprize.org. Karikó has also keynoted scientific conferences such as the **mRNA Science and Society Symposium** and was honored at the **2022 International mRNA Conference**. In media interviews (e.g. with *Nobelprize.org* and major news outlets), she often fields questions about how she persevered; one memorable interaction had the interviewer conclude her story proves persistence matters, to which Karikó simply replied, "Yes, to persevere…" nobelprize.org. She has also used these platforms to advocate for basic research funding, pointing out that breakthroughs like hers were long shots that only paid off after many years.

Influence: Katalin Karikó has become a **symbol of resilient innovation in pharma and biotech**. Her life story – an immigrant scientist making a revolutionary contribution after years of rejection – has inspired countless researchers and even altered how institutions view high-risk research. As a speaker, her authenticity and passion reinforce the message that **scientific innovation requires patience, belief, and global collaboration**. The mRNA platform she helped create is now being explored for vaccines against HIV, cancer, and more – a ripple effect of her perseverance. In industry circles, Karikó's recognition (Nobel Prize, Breakthrough Prize, etc.) also highlights the importance of academia-industry partnerships (she joined BioNTech in 2013 to push mRNA towards real products). By openly sharing credit and urging support for the "diligent fellow scientists" in the trenches nobelprize.org, Karikó influences a culture of collaboration and acknowledgement in pharma R&D.

> **Notable Quote:** "But I suppose the message in all this is that **persistence can pay off, in the end.**" nobelprize.org

8. Dr. Scott Gottlieb – Former FDA Commissioner and Health Policy Leader

Background: Dr. Scott Gottlieb is a physician and public health expert who served as the 23rd Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) from 2017 to 2019 2024.worldmedicalinnovation.org. At FDA, he was known for advancing policies to streamline drug approvals and encourage innovation – his tenure saw record numbers of novel drug and device approvals 2024.worldmedicalinnovation.org. Gottlieb had earlier roles at FDA and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and since leaving government he has become a prominent commentator on healthcare. He is a Resident Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, a partner at NEA (a venture capital firm), and sits on boards of companies including Pfizer and Illumina 2024.worldmedicalinnovation.org. Dr. Gottlieb is also the author of *"Uncontrolled Spread,"* a best-selling book analyzing the U.S. COVID-19 response.

Speaking Topics: Scott Gottlieb is a prolific speaker on a range of topics at the intersection of healthcare, policy, and technology. **Regulatory innovation** is a central theme: he frequently discusses how to modernize regulation to keep pace with science. Under his leadership, FDA rolled out new frameworks for gene therapies, cell therapies, and digital health devices

2024.worldmedicalinnovation.org, and he continues to speak about adapting regulatory pathways for advances like AI in drug development. In fact, Gottlieb has been "a primary voice" describing how **AI tools will disrupt healthcare**, advocating for clear regulatory guidelines to foster AI-driven therapeutics wwsg.com. Another key topic is the **economics of healthcare and access**. He addresses questions like how to ensure patients have affordable access to innovations without bankrupting the system wwsg.com. In speeches titled "The Landscape of Affordable Healthcare," he explores sustainable models for drug pricing and insurance coverage wwsg.com. Gottlieb also speaks on **pandemic preparedness and lessons learned** from COVID-19. He argues that public health must be viewed through a national security lens, outlining steps to improve future outbreak responses wwsg.com wwsg.com. Additionally, as a former regulator, he offers **insider insights on policymaking** – explaining how decisions are made in Washington and advising industry leaders on engaging with regulators wwsg.com.

Notable Engagements: Dr. Gottlieb is in high demand on the conference circuit, often as a keynote speaker who can bridge clinical, business, and policy perspectives. In 2024 he keynoted the **MM+M Transform conference** on healthcare marketing mmm-online.com and the **Summit on the Future of Rural Health Care**, speaking on "Navigating Health Care's Next Chapter" wwsg.com. He's a regular at **medical innovation forums** (e.g. World Medical Innovation Forum 2024) where he discusses cutting-edge topics like AI's impact on drug development 2024.worldmedicalinnovation.org. Media appearances also amplify his influence: Gottlieb is a familiar face on CNBC and Face the Nation, providing analysis on drug approvals, vaccination campaigns, and public health policy. For instance, in congressional hearings and op-eds he has weighed in on the need for clearer pandemic response authority and investments in vaccine R&D wwsg.com. During COVID-19, his steady commentary helped interpret FDA and CDC actions to the public.

Influence: Scott Gottlieb's unique blend of **regulatory experience and communication skills** has made him one of the most influential voices in pharma policy today. He has significantly influenced debates on drug pricing reforms, FDA modernization, and pandemic policy. Within the industry, companies often heed his perspectives on how future FDA policies might shape areas like **gene therapy, real-world evidence, or AI integration** 2024.worldmedicalinnovation.org wwsg.com. Gottlieb's calls for balancing innovation with safety and access echo in policy proposals (for example, streamlining clinical trial requirements or reforming payment models for curative treatments). Moreover, by highlighting the **"future of science and medicine"** – from gene editing to regenerative medicine – he reinforces a forward-looking mindset among pharma leaders, urging them to prepare for breakthroughs on the horizon wwsg.com. In sum, through his speeches and writing, Dr. Gottlieb continues to shape the environment in which pharmaceutical innovation and regulation coexist.

> **Notable Quote:** "What is the future of medical innovation and how will we unlock the promise of new technologies like gene therapy, digital health, artificial intelligence, and regenerative medicine?.. What are the regulatory and reimbursement strategies we'll need to adopt to make sure these innovations reach patients?" wwsg.com

9. Dr. Peter Hotez – Vaccine Scientist and Advocate

Background: Dr. Peter J. Hotez is a physician-scientist who has dedicated his career to developing vaccines for neglected tropical diseases and to public science advocacy. Based in Texas, he is the Co-Director of the Texas Children's Hospital Center for Vaccine Development and Dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine washingtonpost.com. Hotez has led efforts to create low-cost vaccines for diseases like hookworm and Chagas, and most recently co-developed **"Corbevax,"** an affordable, patent-free COVID-19 vaccine for low-income countries washingtonpost.com. For this work, he and colleague Maria Elena Bottazzi were nominated for the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize washingtonpost.com. Hotez is also well known for his outspoken defense of vaccines and science – he's authored books on the rise of anti-vaccine sentiment and is a familiar figure in media countering misinformation.

Speaking Topics: Peter Hotez is a passionate speaker on **global health equity, vaccine science, and combating misinformation**. A core theme is the plight of "neglected" diseases and populations – he highlights how billions in the developing world lack access to vaccines and medicines that wealthy countries take for granted washingtonpost.com. At the same time, Hotez underscores that **misinformation in wealthy countries is causing resurgences of diseases**: for example, he notes that false claims about vaccines have led to declining vaccination rates and the return of measles and other once-controlled illnesses washingtonpost.com washingtonpost.com. In numerous interviews and talks, Dr. Hotez has addressed the tactics of the anti-vaccine movement and urged that *"misinformation | [be] treated as a public health issue"* (essentially a societal pathogen) law.northeastern.edu scienceblog.cincinnatichildrens.org. He emphasizes **clear science communication** as a remedy: *"Communicating clear messages about the ongoing pandemic is of vital importance in an environment rife with confusing and misleading messages,"* Hotez said, cautioning against extremes of alarmism or denial en.wikipedia.org. Another major topic for Hotez is **vaccine diplomacy and access**. He frequently points out that technologies like the COVID vaccines must reach everyone – he advocates for sharing know-how and scaling production in the Global South, exemplified by his team's open-source Corbevax vaccine. Additionally, as a pediatrician and a parent of an adult daughter with autism, Hotez speaks from personal experience to debunk the myth linking vaccines to autism, bringing empathy to the conversation scienceblog.cincinnatichildrens.org en.wikipedia.org.

Notable Engagements: Dr. Hotez engages with both scientific audiences and the general public. He has keynoted conferences like the **Annual Texas Vaccine Policy Symposium** and health law meetings focused on misinformation law.northeastern.edu. In 2023, he spoke at forums about the legal and ethical tools to counter health misinformation, reflecting his role as an advocate-scientist bridging multiple domains law.northeastern.edu reliasmedia.com. Hotez often testifies before U.S. Congress on topics such as pandemic response and global vaccine initiatives. Moreover, Hotez's frequent media appearances (CNN, MSNBC, podcasts) serve as a form of public speaking – for instance, his candid Q&A with *The Washington Post* readers

addressed practical questions about masks, boosters, and misinformation in real time washingtonpost.com washingtonpost.com. He has also delivered commencement speeches for universities, instilling in graduates the importance of science for humanity. Recognition of his advocacy is growing: in 2023 he received the AAAS Award for Scientific Freedom and was honored with the inaugural Fauci Courage in Leadership Award for combating anti-science aggression en.wikipedia.org en.wikipedia.org.

Influence: Peter Hotez has emerged as a **leading advocate for vaccine science and global health**. His influence is evident in both policy and public opinion. By persistently countering misinformation, he has helped inform policymakers and social media platforms on the real harm of anti-vaccine propaganda. His concept of **"science tikkun"** – using science as a way to repair the world, whether via climate action, vaccine development, or fighting discrimination en.wikipedia.org – encapsulates his broad humanistic approach to scientific advocacy. Hotez has also influenced the pharma discussion by demonstrating that vaccines can be developed with alternative models (open science, nonprofit approaches), potentially inspiring more initiatives for diseases of poverty. For the industry, he serves as a conscience, reminding pharma professionals that scientific advancements have societal responsibilities. Perhaps most importantly, through countless talks and media engagements, Dr. Hotez has **helped maintain public trust in vaccines** during a time of intense skepticism. His combination of deep expertise and willingness to engage hostile audiences has positioned him as an indispensable voice defending the integrity of biomedical science in the public sphere.

> **Notable Quote:** "We've been hearing either the sky was falling or there was no problem… the reality is more nuanced than that and that requires some explanation based on scientific principles." en.wikipedia.org

10. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw – Executive Chairperson of Biocon

Background: Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw is a pioneering biotech entrepreneur from India and a powerful voice for the global biotech industry. She is the founder and Executive Chairperson of **Biocon Ltd.**, which she established in 1978 as a small enzyme manufacturer and grew into India's leading biopharmaceutical company. With over four decades in biotech, Mazumdar-Shaw has been a trailblazer – one of the first in India to push for biotech innovation and high-quality biosimilars (generic biologic drugs) to make therapies affordable. She has received numerous honors, including being named among *TIME* magazine's 100 most influential people in the world us.londonspeakerbureau.com us.londonspeakerbureau.com. She also serves on various national and international advisory councils on science and trade, reflecting her standing as a thought leader.

Speaking Topics: Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw speaks passionately about **innovation, entrepreneurship, and the potential of biotechnology to solve societal challenges**. A

recurring theme is her call for **innovation-driven value creation in pharma, especially in emerging markets like India**. She often points out that while India is a top producer of generic medicines and vaccines by volume, it needs to capture more value through original R&D. *"India ranks 14th in terms of value in the global pharma landscape. We need to invest in R&D and foster a culture of intellectual property to capture greater value,"* Mazumdar-Shaw urged at a recent industry forum economictimes.indiatimes.com. She emphasizes building an innovation ecosystem – bringing government, academia, and industry together – to make India a global bio-innovation hub economictimes.indiatimes.com economictimes.indiatimes.com. Another focus is **entrepreneurship and leadership**, especially for women. Mazumdar-Shaw often shares her experience as a "first-generation entrepreneur" overcoming gender and financial hurdles in the 1970s, to inspire young entrepreneurs to persevere in the tech-biotech space us.londonspeakerbureau.com us.londonspeakerbureau.com. She also speaks on **global health and access**, noting that biotech can provide solutions for healthcare and agriculture in developing countries, but it requires visionary investment. Her talks frequently highlight the importance of **public policy that supports scientific research**, citing her own role in advising the Indian government to implement biotech-friendly policies us.londonspeakerbureau.com us.londonspeakerbureau.com.

Notable Engagements: Mazumdar-Shaw is a sought-after speaker at both Indian and international forums. She has delivered keynote addresses at events like **Global Bio-India 2024**, where she articulated her vision for India's biotech future economictimes.indiatimes.com economictimes.indiatimes.com. She is also a familiar figure at the **World Economic Forum** and has spoken on global panels about biotechnology's role in sustainable development. In academia, she has given talks at universities (e.g. University of California, Berkeley in 2021 kiranshaw.blog) about the interface of biotech, policy, and society. Mazumdar-Shaw delivered a TED Talk as well, on thinking big in biotech and the impact of affordable innovation. Within industry circles, she often opens major conferences like **BIO (Biotechnology Innovation Organization) summits** or **FICCI health conferences** in India, rallying for stronger industry-academia collaborations. Her commentary is also prominent in business media; for instance, she frequently writes op-eds and appears on news discussions advocating for research incentives and discussing how Indian pharma can move up the value chain.

Influence: Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw has been a **transformative figure for the pharma/biotech sector, particularly in the context of emerging markets**. Through her speeches and advocacy, she has influenced Indian government policies to increase funding for biotech incubators, improve regulatory infrastructure, and encourage startups. Globally, she's raised awareness that innovation is not the monopoly of Western companies – showcasing successful development of drugs (like biosimilar insulin and antibodies) by an Indian company. As a speaker, her calls for **greater R&D investment and IP creation** resonate in countries aiming to build their own biotech industries economictimes.indiatimes.com. She has arguably inspired a generation of biotech entrepreneurs in Asia. Moreover, Mazumdar-Shaw's emphasis on *"affordable innovation"* has nudged the global industry toward thinking about cost-effective biotech solutions for the developing world (for example, Biocon's affordable insulin project is often cited in access to

medicine discussions). As a woman leader who broke glass ceilings, she also influences diversity and inclusion narratives in the pharma leadership space. In summary, her thought leadership pushes the industry toward a more **inclusive, innovation-centric global model**, where new medicines are developed with both excellence and affordability in mind.

> **Notable Quote:** "We need to invest in R&D and foster a culture of intellectual property to capture greater value... \ [India] can achieve greater value by nurturing innovation." economictimes.indiatimes.com

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Conclusion: The pharmaceutical industry is propelled forward not just by breakthrough discoveries, but also by the **visionary voices** of its leaders. The ten figures profiled here – from CEOs who steered companies through historic vaccine rollouts, to scientists who persevered in research against all odds, to regulators and advocates shaping policy and public opinion – each offer critical insights in their public speaking. Their common threads include a dedication to innovation, a commitment to improving patient lives, and an understanding that communication and collaboration are as important as pure scientific prowess. As thought leaders, they don't just represent their organizations; they galvanize the wider community of pharma and biotech professionals. By listening to these speakers, industry professionals and policymakers alike can glean a roadmap for addressing current challenges: whether it's harnessing AI in drug development, ensuring equitable access to medicines, fostering public trust in science, or inspiring the next generation of researchers. The continued influence of these voices will be essential in navigating the complex, fast-evolving landscape of global healthcare.

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