
Karen Bernstein, One of Biotech's Most Influential Voices, Elected C-Path Board Chair

BioCentury co-founder succeeds Wain Fishburn, effective July 1

TUCSON, Ariz., July 14, 2026 — Critical Path Institute® (C-Path) today announced that its Board of Directors has elected Karen Bernstein, Ph.D., as chair, effective July 1, 2026. Bernstein, co-founder and chair of BioCentury Inc., has served on the C-Path board since her appointment in March 2023. She succeeds M. Wainwright Fishburn, Jr., J.D., who concludes his tenure as chair after five years of service.

Bernstein has worked in the biopharmaceutical sector since 1987. She co-founded BioCentury in 1992 and serves as its chairman, building the publication into a leading provider of analysis and data for the industry. She has been a director at Ovid Therapeutics, a trustee of the Keck Graduate Institute and a member of the Board of Overseers of Scripps Research, among other positions, and serves on the board of Mind What Matters, a nonprofit supporting Alzheimer's family caregivers. Her honors include induction into the Biotechnology Hall of Fame, recognition by Scientific American as one of the 100 most influential people in biotech, and selection as one of the Silicon Valley Business Journal's 100 Women of Influence. She holds a Ph.D. in political science from Stanford University and a B.A. in politics and history from Brandeis University, where she served for many years on the university's Science Advisory Council.



Karen Bernstein, Ph.D.

“Chairing this board has been one of the great privileges of my professional life,” said Fishburn. “C-Path holds a rare position in drug development, trusted by regulators and industry alike, and its people have earned that trust many times over. Karen has analyzed more development programs, across more therapeutic areas, than nearly anyone in this field, and she brings that depth to every question this board will take up in the future. The board could not be in better hands, and I look forward to watching what she and CEO Klaus Romero build together.”

“Not only has Karen earned the respect of executives, funders and regulators whose cooperation our work requires, but she has the standing to bring people and organizations to the table who would not otherwise be able to collaborate so directly as through C-Path,” said C-Path Chief Executive Officer Klaus Romero, M.D., M.S., FCP. “That is the expertise C-Path depends on, and I am delighted to partner with her in the years ahead.”

“Wain led this board with steady judgment and a genuine devotion to our mission,” Romero continued. “During Wain’s service, C-Path experienced a period of remarkable growth, establishing our European headquarters and securing regulatory endorsements for multiple innovative drug development solutions, all while expanding our funding and programs to reach more diseases with unmet need than at any point in our history. On behalf of everyone at C-Path, I thank him for years of counsel that made us a stronger organization, and I welcome Karen as the new chair of C-Path’s Board of Directors.”

“I built my career providing drug developers with a broad strategic overview of the environment in which they operate, while digging into the details of how drugs go from discovery to patients,” said Bernstein. “C-Path is one of the rare organizations whose work tackles difficult, precompetitive spaces that might otherwise be neglected. Serving on this board for the past three years has shown me how its people earn the trust regulators and researchers place in them. Wain hands me a strong board and a healthy organization, and I am grateful to him for both.”

Consistent with C-Path’s role as a neutral, trusted third party in drug development, the Board of Directors includes founders and chief executives of biotechnology companies, former senior officials of the FDA and the European Medicines Agency, leaders of national patient advocacy organizations, and experts in health economics, health policy, data science, venture investment, law and finance.

Bernstein’s appointment was effective July 1, 2026.

About Critical Path Institute

Critical Path Institute® (C-Path) is an independent, nonprofit established in 2005 as a public-private partnership in response to the FDA’s Critical Path Initiative. C-Path’s mission is to lead collaborations that advance better treatments for people worldwide. Globally recognized as a pioneer in accelerating drug development, C-Path has established numerous international consortia, programs and initiatives that currently include more than 1,600 scientists and representatives from government and regulatory agencies, academia, patient organizations, disease foundations and pharmaceutical and biotech companies. With dedicated team members located throughout the world, C-Path’s global headquarters is located in Tucson, Arizona, and C-Path’s Europe subsidiary is headquartered in Amsterdam, Netherlands. For more information, visit c-path.org.

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Media Contacts:

Roxan Triolo Olivas
C-Path
520.954.1634
rolivas@c-path.org

Kissy Black
C-Path
615.310.1894
kblack@c-path.org