



Charles River Extends Commitment to Advanced Therapy Developers with Second Incubator Program Cohort

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Final 2025 global cohort onboarding, with applications now open for 2026

WILMINGTON, Mass.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Dec. 11, 2025-- Charles River Laboratories International, Inc. (NYSE: CRL) today announced the second cohort of its [Cell & Gene Therapy Incubator Program](#) (CIP). [Launched in December 2024](#), with the [inaugural cohort announced in April 2025](#), the program provides early-stage biotechnology pioneers with access to extensive scientific and commercial expertise, as well as a comprehensive ecosystem of discovery, development, and manufacturing capabilities, to expedite the development of technologies and life-changing therapies for patients in need.

"The CIP's success shows how effectively it attracts top talent and promotes innovation," said Kerstin Dolph, Corporate Senior Vice President of Global Manufacturing, Charles River. "By establishing a strong foundation for commercial viability, the CIP is helping participants advance life-saving therapeutics and transform innovative ideas into real-world impact."

The CIP cohort of six companies comprises four advanced therapy developers: CureAge Therapeutics, InterAct Therapeutics, Jaan Biotherapeutics, Inc., and Kopra Bio, plus two enabling technology developers: W.R. Grace & Co. (Grace), and HTLab AG's Biowerkli. Program participants benefit from tailored mentorship, consultative regulatory and quality expertise, fit-for-purpose training initiatives, and preferential access to Charles River's global network of facilities, curated to support cell and gene therapies from concept to cure.

Incubating Promising Drug Developers

- **[CureAge Therapeutics](#)**: Developing a platform to treat peripheral nerve diseases affecting more than 180 million people worldwide. Starting with Neurofibromatosis type 1 (NF1), a genetic disorder that causes peripheral nerve tumors, CureAge uses lipid nanoparticles and a local route of administration to deliver genetic treatment directly to tumor cells, aiming to restore NF1 gene function and eliminate surrounding tumor cells.

"Our platform expands possibilities for patients with peripheral nerve diseases and offers- a new therapeutic path for NF1 patients, with the potential to cure existing tumors and prevent new ones from forming," said Dr. Gonzalo Fernández-Miranda, CEO and co-founder of CureAge Therapeutics. "Founded by the Children's Tumor Foundation and Deep Science Ventures, CureAge's selection for the Charles River Incubator Program marks a significant milestone that will accelerate our journey toward the clinic."

Shortlisted ahead of the Company's [Cell & Gene Therapy Summit in London](#) on September 16, 2025, Gonzalo Fernandez-Miranda, Co-Founder & CEO of CureAge Therapeutics presented the company to potential investors.

- **[InterAct Therapeutics](#)**: A preclinical stage biotech company developing AAV8-based gene therapies for metastatic cancer, with an initial focus on breast cancer-derived liver metastases (BC-LM).

"Metastasis accounts for approximately 90% of cancer deaths, and there is a gaping therapeutic void for patients with BC-LM, who face a survival window of just 3–15 months. The acceptance into the Charles River Incubator Program not only validates our novel AAV8 approach, but critically, it will accelerate the development and scale-up of our InterAct Print™ platform—the real long-term value driver with true multi-indication optionality. We are honored to partner with Charles River," said Daniel Hargrove, Co-founder and CEO of InterAct Therapeutics.

"For the first time, we are beginning to crack the biological code on how infiltrating tumor cells create space in distant organs. Our proprietary InterAct Print™ computational engine identified the essential genes driving liver colonization and therapeutic targets. The Charles River Incubator provides the critical manufacturing and scientific support to translate this foundational discovery into a safe, durable, and liver-directed gene therapy for breast cancer liver metastases. We are honored to partner with Charles River," added Isaac Chan, MD, PhD, Co-founder and CSO of InterAct Therapeutics.

- **[Jaan Biotherapeutics, Inc.](#)**: Focused on novel therapies to activate the cardiac regeneration process in diseased hearts using proprietary microRNA targeting technologies, Jaan Biotherapeutics, Inc. aims to initiate clinical testing for its lead programs in 2027.

"Jaan Biotherapeutics, Inc is honored to be selected to be part of CIP and we look forward to working with Charles River as we develop our treatments for patients that are at a high risk of death following an Acute Myocardial Infarction and other cardiac diseases where endogenous regeneration of heart muscle and reprogramming is required to restore heart

function,” said Dr. Bhawanjit Brar Ph.D. CEO, CSO and Founder of Jaan Biotherapeutics, Inc.

- **[Kopra Bio](#)**: A Y Combinator (YC) backed start-up developing an *in vivo* tumor editing platform targeting solid tumors with an initial focus on the most aggressive form of brain cancer, glioblastoma. Kopra Bio’s breakthrough technology enables safe, specific and durable delivery of therapeutic payloads, directly to the site of the tumor, driving treatment response while limiting off-target effects.

“Kopra Bio’s *in vivo* tumor editing platform has already generated our first development candidate which we are advancing in an area of high unmet need, glioblastoma,” said Andrew Bartynski, PhD, Founder and CEO of Kopra Bio. “Charles River is the gold standard in the industry, and we look forward to partnering with them to accelerate our path to the clinic.”

Enabling Advanced Therapy Technologies

- **[Grace](#)**: A leading global supplier of specialty chemicals and pharmaceutical solutions, Grace is advancing bioprocessing applications for its proprietary superparamagnetic silica technology in plasmid DNA production. Participation in the incubator enables Grace to accelerate advanced therapy innovations and unlock novel uses for its platform.

“At Grace, our commitment to solving next-generation challenges drives us to continually expand the potential of our superparamagnetic silica technology. The incubator program provides a focused environment to fast-track our proof of concept for new applications in therapeutic-grade pDNA purification. This collaboration is a strategic step to amplify our impact and deliver life-saving solutions to patients,” said Brenda Kelly, President of the Material Technologies business at Grace.

- **[HTLab Biowerkli](#)**: Reinforced by world-class, open-source AI, the Swiss-based technology company aims to empower the global biotech community with transparent, accessible AI, digitalization, and smart biomanufacturing tools to accelerate the development of safe, life-changing therapies for patients by turning disconnected data into a predictive engine for manufacturing and release success.

“Disconnected data slows science. We’re here to fix that by turning every data point into a decision point, powering smarter biomanufacturing and analytics that make advanced therapies more accessible, more affordable, and available to patients sooner,” said Vitaly Podoplelov, CEO of HTLab AG and Founder of BioWerkli project. “We are honored to be part of the Charles River Incubator Program as we scale this impact.”

“The success of CIP depends on its capacity to foster a collaborative environment where early-stage companies can flourish even with limited investment opportunities,” added Kristen Eisenhauer, Corporate Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer, Charles River. “Through Charles River’s comprehensive concept-to-cure portfolio and guidance from proven industry leaders, participants are advancing their programs with confidence and speed.”

Cell and Gene Therapy from Concept to Cure

Committed to streamlining the development of advanced therapies from the earliest stages to commercialization, Charles River has established an industry-leading cell and gene therapy portfolio, integrating discovery and safety assessment services, biologics testing, and pre-clinical through commercial-scale manufacturing solutions.

CIP leverages this unique portfolio to help biotechnology companies jumpstart promising ideas; learn more and [register your interest](#) to participate in a future cohort.

Bringing together subject matter experts, executives, and thought leaders in the CGT space to discuss and navigate critical challenges, the Cell & Gene Therapy Summit returns to Cambridge, MA on March 26, 2026: <https://bit.ly/3KjAO7S>

About Charles River

Charles River provides essential products and services to help pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, government agencies and leading academic institutions around the globe accelerate their research and drug development efforts. Our dedicated employees are focused on providing clients with exactly what they need to improve and expedite the discovery, early-stage development and safe manufacture of new therapies for the patients who need them. To learn more about our unique portfolio and breadth of services, visit www.criver.com.

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