



The [Drug Discovery Center of Innovation \(DDCOI\)](#) is a non-profit, virtual drug development center that works closely with disease research foundations, academia, industry and government to bring scientific assets, funding and drug development expertise together to advance novel therapeutics to market.

Funded through a grant from the North Carolina Biotechnology Center to support the economic expansion of North Carolina's biotechnology industry, the DDCOI facilitates cost-efficient early drug discovery and development efforts for our partners. The DDCOI provides: 1) an early assessment of commercial potential; 2) timelines and cost estimates for the fastest route to submitting an IND/NDA; 3) [expert drug development guidance](#) precisely focused on obtaining successful regulatory decisions; 4) hands-on [project management experts](#) with extensive pharmaceutical expertise; and 5) shared focus to drive fast drug approval, asset partnering or asset sale.

DDCOI's approach can be differentiated from traditional biotech development by two key characteristics:

- DDCOI operates as an [ultra-virtual company](#), engaging people resources only as or when needed to focus on specific development tasks. This keeps the team and budget right-sized to the task at hand.
- DDCOI focuses on development of single assets, rather than creating infrastructure around a suite of assets.

The DDCOI is typically engaged to provide these services within either a consulting agreement or DDCOI-managed company:

- Consulting or contract agreements are typically created to support early asset evaluation, provide strategic advice, perform pharmaceutical due diligence, or to support grant applications for further funding.
- DDCOI also partners with researchers or in-licenses assets that are developed within DDCOI-managed companies. This offers a mechanism for low cost development of early discoveries where funding, expertise, or other necessary resources may be lacking.

[Paula Ehrlich, DVM, PhD](#) is President & CEO of the Drug Discovery Center of Innovation. Dr. Ehrlich has a diverse background that integrates corporate pharmaceutical and academic research with veterinary surgical, clinical, and research expertise. Dr. Ehrlich joined DDCOI in 2010, as VP & CSO. Prior to joining the DDCOI, she was Senior Director of Scientific Affairs at Ansaris (formerly Locus Pharmaceuticals), which she joined as Senior Director of Translational Biology. At Ansaris, she led strategic activities to establish preclinical proof-of-concept for novel therapeutic targets and led business development efforts to identify new collaboration opportunities. From 2002-2008, Dr. Ehrlich held positions of increasing responsibility at Merck Research Laboratories in West Point, PA, culminating in her role as Preclinical Oncology Imaging Lead & Associate Franchise Director. At Merck she led initiatives to establish imaging biomarkers and proof-of-concept for over 12 lead compounds, including PI3K pathway inhibitors, cell cycle and check point inhibitors, which are currently in clinical trials.

Dr. Ehrlich has a B.S. in Zoology from Duke University, a Masters degree in Environmental Planning from the University of Virginia, a DVM from the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, and a PhD in Bone Physiology from the Royal Veterinary College, University College London. She has Six Sigma Green Belt training and is a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons.