

# BIOTECH EVENT TO RETURN

## Set for 2012 in Hub

By JAY FITZGERALD

The biggest biotechnology convention in the world is coming back to Boston, despite past industry threats that drug companies wouldn't hold conferences in the state due to the new medical gift-ban law.

BIO International, which shattered attendance records when it was last held in Boston in 2007, announced yesterday that it's returning in 2012, hoping to attract an even larger audience and pump more money into the city.

Gov. Deval Patrick, Mayor Thomas M. Menino and other officials announced BIO's return at a press conference yesterday at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, where the mega-convention was held two years ago.

"Massachusetts is one of the undisputed centers of the life-sciences (industry)," proclaimed Patrick, who was lauded for lobbying for BIO's return to Boston.

Menino, who earlier in the day announced that two small biotech firms were opening shop in Boston, said

the BIO convention's return to the city was "further proof" that Boston is considered a major capital of innovation.

Two years ago, BIO attracted about 22,000 convention-goers from around the world, a figure that hasn't been repeated in other cities since. BIO is hoping the Boston show will attract 26,000 people in three years.

It will be a tight fit in the city, as organizers also have to use the nearby World Trade Center and the Back Bay's Hynes Convention Center for some of the spillover events.

But Robbi Lycette, a vice president of BIO, said the industry hopes to hold "regular" shows in Boston.

Some in the life-sciences and medical-device sectors have threatened not to hold conventions in Boston due to a new state law that bans doctors from receiving gifts and dinners from medical companies.

But Lycette said other states are now enacting similar laws and the federal government is considering similar legislation.

