

Safia Rizvi Bio

Safia Rizvi is a distinguished multidimensional business executive, entrepreneur, and biomedical scientist with over two decades of leadership experience in the life sciences and healthcare industry. Her career is defined by her relentless pursuit of “Innovation for Purpose” and a commitment to making effective therapies accessible to patients everywhere.

As CEO of CILA Therapeutics, Safia is driving the development of novel therapies for chronic lung diseases like COPD, PCD and Cystic Fibrosis and a Gateway platform to significantly enhance RNA delivery directly to the lungs. Under her leadership, CILA has progressed from a concept to a robust pipeline of five (5) programs. The lead drug candidate, CIL-05, is prioritized for the treatment of an orphan disease, primary Ciliary dyskinesia (PCD), and is 12 months from clinical trials.

Prior to CILA, Safia held pivotal executive positions at innovative biotechnology organizations, including Chief Operating Officer of CARAVAN BIOLOGIX and Managing Director of the Blue Group. Her strategic insights and operational expertise have been instrumental in advancing transformational cell therapy platforms, and she has provided invaluable advice to CEOs and leadership teams.

Safia has broad experience across multiple disease areas and therapeutic modalities, spanning traditional Pills, Biologics, Vaccines, and Cell & Gene therapies. With diverse and extensive experience as a scientist and business leader at large and mid-cap multinationals (GlaxoSmithKline, Astra Zeneca, UCB) and small innovative startups (CARAVAN), she brings a distinct perspective to the strategic challenges of organizations. She has led multiple product launches in the US, EU, and Asia and effectively navigated global and local regulatory and market access environments. She brings invaluable insight to corporations seeking global expansion and tangible growth.

Safia’s academic credentials include an MBA from Wharton School, a Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of Oklahoma, and a comprehensive “Board Room Ready” program at George Washington University. Her research contributions are reflected in numerous publications and over 25 patents. Among her various recognitions are the American Heart Association Fellowship, Henry Termeer Fellowship, the American Red Cross Award, the Working Mother of the Year Award, and E&Y’s Businesswoman of Distinction award.

Active in both for-profit and non-profit sectors, Safia serves on the boards of Kermode Biotechnologies, a vaccine company, and eLIT, a nonprofit she co-founded in 2001 to support education and computer literacy for economically challenged women and children in Southeast Asia. Her work and life experiences have shaped her into a competent, anchored, and humble business leader capable of driving change and making a lasting impact globally.

