

Life Sciences Group Of The Year: Gibson Dunn

By **Dan McKay**

Law360 (February 24, 2026, 4:00 PM EST) -- Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP advised 89bio in a complex sale to Roche Holdings that could be worth up to \$3.5 billion and won a precedent-setting victory that allowed Sun Pharma to launch an innovative alopecia treatment, earning a spot among the 2025 Law360 Life Sciences Groups of the Year.

The 89bio transaction closed in October, demonstrating Gibson Dunn's deep expertise in life sciences, deal-making and regulatory compliance. The agreement included a nontradable contingent value right, or CVR, in which 89bio shareholders can receive extra cash payments contingent on hitting certain regulatory and commercial milestones.

Gibson Dunn served as lead counsel for 89bio Inc., which is developing therapies to treat liver and cardiometabolic diseases.

Ryan A. Murr, a Gibson Dunn partner and co-chair of its life sciences practice group, said the firm's culture of collaboration, mastery of the life sciences domain and creativity make its work stand out for clients — all strengths put to good use in the 89bio deal.

"The culture of the firm is one that's very integrated and collaborative — that we really do pull together and team up," Murr said.

Its life sciences group "is very good at what we do. ... We are not tourists in the space. We do life sciences all the time," he said.

The firm's attorneys took care to craft the \$3.5 billion 89bio transaction, including the CVR component, to satisfy potential scrutiny from the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, Murr said. They also navigated international tax issues.

Gibson Dunn has about 140 life sciences attorneys in multiple offices and practice groups across the globe. The size of the life sciences group has been growing, and it's an area of strategic focus for the firm.

Charlotte Jacobsen, a Gibson Dunn partner specializing in patent litigation, with expertise in biology and chemistry, said the firm's across-the-board depth is "really valuable to our clients." The life sciences



group includes lawyers who have doctorates or other graduate degrees in technical topics.

"No matter what issue comes up, we've got the people who understand the issue and can advise the client," she said.

The expertise helped the firm win a quick, precedent-setting victory for Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd.

Less than an hour after the end of oral argument in April, the D.C. Circuit vacated an injunction and allowed the company to launch its breakthrough alopecia drug Leqselvi amid a patent dispute.

It was a technical case that drew on Gibson Dunn's knowledge of both the science and the business of the pharmaceutical industry. The firm successfully argued that a competing product was too far away from its own launch to be irreparably harmed by Sun Pharma's medicine.

Jacobsen said the case "required us to understand organic chemistry, physiology, pharmacology — a real diverse set of technical elements relevant to the litigation."

It was an especially meaningful win, she said, because of the chance to help patients with alopecia, a condition that can cause hair loss on the head, face and body.

"Vacating the preliminary injunction so quickly after the oral argument was something I had never seen — and so important to the client," Jacobsen said.

Gibson Dunn last year also advised Arrowhead Pharmaceuticals on a licensing deal and collaboration with Sarepta Therapeutics that makes Arrowhead eligible for roughly \$10 billion in development and sales milestone payments, in addition to tiered royalties.

The agreement included \$825 million immediately for Arrowhead, including cash and an equity investment. The collaboration covers multiple RNA interference therapeutics for rare neuromuscular and pulmonary diseases, leveraging Arrowhead's proprietary RNAi platform.

The company had asked Gibson Dunn for help completing the Sarepta deal in just a matter of weeks. The transaction closed in February 2025, on the requested timeline.

Murr said a colleague, Gibson Dunn partner Karen Spindler, "pulled off the impossible and constructed a ridiculously complicated multiprogram, multiplatform collaboration with Sarepta" under deadline pressure.

"A single collaboration for a single drug or a target is complicated enough," Murr said. "This was multiple candidates, as well as a collaboration for future programs to be named, and then in parallel with that, there was also an equity investment."

Other wins by Gibson Dunn's life sciences group include advising Alcon, an eye care leader, on its roughly \$1.5 billion acquisition of STAAR Surgical Co. amid an activist shareholder campaign opposing the deal.

Gibson Dunn also represented Gilead Sciences in a series of Hatch-Waxman lawsuits involving its blockbuster HIV drug Genvoya and certain Gilead patents. Collaboration between Gibson Dunn and

Gilead's strong in-house counsel helped the company achieve favorable settlements to the litigation, Jacobsen said.

Gilead "is a leader at the forefront of addressing HIV and has really transformed it from a devastating diagnosis to a disease that folks are living with, and they continue to innovate in that field," Jacobsen said.

She said she was proud to play a part in supporting the company's work.

"We couldn't have got that great result without a true partnership and collaboration between outside counsel and in-house counsel," Jacobsen said.

--Additional reporting by Dawood Fakhir, Dani Kass and Al Barbarino. Editing by Dave Trumbore.