

Verge Genomics Appoints John Applegate as Chief Financial Officer



Former Biogen executive and AI company builder to support Verge's strategic finance initiatives as it builds the leading tech-enabled drug discovery company

Verge Genomics, a tech-enabled drug discovery company pioneering the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and human data to develop new drugs announced that John Applegate will join the company as Chief Financial Officer.

Applegate joins the company from Valo Health, an AI-powered drug discovery company, where he was a member of the founding leadership team and helped grow the company from seed stage to a valuation greater than \$1B. Prior to Valo, he spent 14 years at Biogen, where he served as the head of global R&D finance, leading a 19 person team supporting nearly 100 R&D programs and a \$2B annual budget.

"Truly transforming drug discovery requires innovation not only on the science and technology, but also on financial strategy and culture," said Alice Zhang, CEO and co-founder of Verge Genomics. "John is one of the most dynamic finance executives I've met, having done everything from raising more than \$400M of capital to rolling his sleeves up as a program director so that he could better understand how scientists do their work. His commitment to using finance as a way to advance innovation rather than a function unto itself makes him a bullseye fit for what we are building at Verge – an enduring biotechnology company for the digital age."

Applegate joins Verge after 24 years of finance leadership in both the biotech and technology industries. As a member of the Biogen R&D Leadership Team, Applegate advised senior management on capital allocation decisions that spanned 11 business units, 14 collaborations, and 32 clinical development programs across 25 indications. He supported major business development transactions, including the \$3.25B purchase of TYSABRI® (natalizumab) rights from Elan Corporation, plc. Applegate also managed critical alliances on Biogen's behalf that included collaborations with Eisai Co., Ltd., on developing and commercializing drug candidates to treat Alzheimer's disease, and Genentech for developing and commercializing RITUXAN® (rituximab). He held leadership roles on multiple late-stage and commercial programs at Biogen, including as program director of lecanemab, one of the first treatments of its kind to show positive Phase 3 results for Alzheimer's disease. Applegate received his MBA from Harvard Business School and a BA in Economics from Northwestern University.

"I have closely observed the evolution of tech-enabled drug discovery over the last few years, having worked at both AI-driven startups and traditional pharma. I joined Verge because their approach to using human data to increase translational success is one of the most substantive and differentiated applications of AI I've seen, one that I believe has the potential to fundamentally shift the cost curve of drug development," said Applegate. "The fact that the team has developed a novel target from the platform to a homegrown clinical program in just four years shows a commitment to execution. This combined with its unique culture and high employee engagement convinced me that Verge is building something special for the long run."

Source: [Verge Genomics](#)

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