AVI BioPharma to Present on NEUGENE Countermeasures to Biological Threats at U.S. Department of Defense 2007 Biodefense Research Conference

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PORTLAND, Ore.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Nov. 6, 2007--AVI BioPharma, Inc. (NASDAQ:AVII), announced that Patrick L. Iversen, Ph.D., AVI's senior vice president of research and development, will present today at the inaugural 2007 Biodefense Research Conference, Bridging the Gap: Biodefense and Beyond, held Nov. 5-7 in Philadelphia. Dr. Iversen's presentation will include updates on studies performed at the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID) evaluating the company's NEUGENE(R) PLUS therapeutic antisense compounds in the treatment of nonhuman primates (NHP) exposed to Ebola virus or Marburg virus.

In an Ebola follow-on study, two surviving NHP from a previous NEUGENE PLUS study were exposed to a lethal challenge of Ebola virus one month post-study, and were not re-treated with the drug. Both were found to be protected from infection. This indicates that treatment with NEUGENE PLUS not only conferred a therapeutic effect, but also provided a potentially lasting immune protective effect.

In a Marburg study, all NHP survived a lethal challenge with the virus when treated with NEUGENE PLUS compounds. Previous pre-clinical studies using the compounds had demonstrated protection against Marburg virus in mouse and guinea pig models.

In addition to these results, Dr. Iversen's presentation will discuss AVI's unique antiviral approach to countermeasures for biological threats, and give an overview of AVI antivirals currently in development for use against Category A and Category B pathogens (as defined by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). His presentation is part of a panel discussion on "Protein and Nucleic Acid Based Therapeutics."

"Our infectious disease program focuses on over 50 different viruses, nearly all of the viral families known to cause human disease," Iversen said. "Together with our research partners we continue to demonstrate the utility of using NEUGENE PLUS technology to combat a variety of viral illnesses, including priority biodefense threats."

The conference is organized by the Joint Science and Technology Office for Chemical and Biological Defense, a Department of Defense organization located within the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA).

Updates on Marburg and Ebola Viral Programs

AVI scientists, in coordination with researchers at USAMRIID, continue to demonstrate progress using NEUGENE PLUS therapeutic antisense compounds for prevention and treatment of infection by two deadly viruses, Ebola and Marburg. These studies were performed under a collaborative agreement between USAMRIID and AVI, funded by AVI's two-year, $28 million research contract with the DTRA.

AVI and USAMRIID have previously reported success using NEUGENE PLUS therapeutic antisense compounds in the treatment of mice, guinea pigs and nonhuman primates (NHP) exposed to the Ebola virus and in mice and guinea pigs exposed to the Marburg virus. Results of several studies were presented at the National Institutes of Health's Filovirus Animal Workshop in September 2007.

About Ebola Zaire and Marburg Viruses

Ebola hemorrhagic fever is a severe, often fatal disease in humans and nonhuman primates (monkeys, gorillas and chimpanzees) that has appeared sporadically since its initial recognition in 1976. The disease is caused by infection with Ebola virus, named after a river in the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) in Africa, where it was first recognized. Ebola virus and Marburg virus are the only two members of a family of RNA viruses called the Filoviridae.

Researchers have hypothesized that the first patient becomes infected through contact with an infected animal. After the first patient in an outbreak setting is infected, the virus can be transmitted in several ways. People can be exposed to Ebola virus from direct contact with the blood and/or secretions of an infected person.

The disease is a National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID) priority A pathogen and a bioterrorism suspect agent of interest to the Department of Defense and Project BioShield. There are currently no approved treatments for Ebola.

Marburg virus was first recognized in 1967, when outbreaks of hemorrhagic fever occurred simultaneously in laboratories in Marburg and Frankfurt, Germany, and in what is now Serbia. Marburg hemorrhagic fever is a rare, severe type of hemorrhagic fever that affects both humans and nonhuman primates. It is caused by a genetically unique animal-borne RNA virus, whose recognition led to the creation of this virus family.

About USAMRIID

USAMRIID, located at Fort Detrick, Maryland, is the lead medical research laboratory for the U.S. Biological Defense Research Program, and plays a key role in national defense and in infectious disease research. The Institute's mission is to conduct basic and applied research on biological threats, resulting in medical solutions (such as vaccines, drugs and diagnostics) to protect the warfighter. USAMRIID is a subordinate laboratory of the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command.

The information contained in this press release does not necessarily reflect the position or the policy of the Government, and no official endorsement should be inferred.

About AVI BioPharma

AVI BioPharma develops therapeutic products for the treatment of life-threatening diseases using third-generation NEUGENE antisense drugs and ESPRIT exon skipping technology. AVI's ESPRIT technology is initially being applied to potential treatments for Duchenne muscular dystrophy. AVI's lead NEUGENE compound is designed to target cell proliferation disorders, including cardiovascular restenosis. In addition to targeting specific genes in the body, AVI's antiviral program uses NEUGENE antisense compounds to combat disease by targeting single-stranded RNA viruses, including dengue virus, Ebola virus and H5N1 avian influenza viruses. More information about AVI is available on the company's Web site at http://www.avibio.com.

"Safe Harbor" Statement under the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995: The statements that are not historical facts contained in this release are forward-looking statements that involve risks and uncertainties, including, but not limited to, the results of research and development efforts, the results of preclinical and clinical testing, the effect of regulation by the FDA and other agencies, the impact of competitive products, product development, commercialization and technological difficulties, and other risks detailed in the company's Securities and Exchange Commission filings.

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