

## **AVI BioPharma Names Jayant Aphale, Ph.D., Senior Vice President of Technical Operations**

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### **New Hire Is Part of Organizational Restructuring Focused on Improving Operational Efficiencies**

BOTHELL, WA, Dec 09, 2011 (MARKETWIRE via COMTEX) -- AVI BioPharma, Inc. (NASDAQ: AVII), a developer of RNA-based therapeutics, today announced the appointment of Jayant Aphale, Ph.D., as Senior Vice President of Technical Operations effective December 12, 2011. Dr. Aphale will have responsibility for all of AVI's internal and outsourced manufacturing activities, with an emphasis on technology transfer, scale-up, CMC compliance, CMC regulatory issues, and CMC project management from initial development through commercial production.

Dr. Aphale, 51, brings over 18 years of cGMP technical operations and cross-functional leadership experiences within small and large companies. Dr. Aphale served as Vice President at GlaxoSmithKline in Belgium leading new product introductions, cGMP scale-up of clinical material manufacturing, U.S. government interactions and global technology transfer of marketed vaccines. Prior to GSK, Dr. Aphale was the Vice President of Manufacturing and Process Sciences at Enobia Pharma where he structured their CMO network and led technology transfer and scale-up of their lead product in the rare disease space. Before Enobia, Dr. Aphale served as Vice President, Manufacturing Operations and Project Management at Acambis, where, besides managing cGMP manufacturing across multiple sites, he established and implemented business processes in project and portfolio management and in transitioning clinical manufacturing to commercial scale.

"Dr. Aphale's broad cross-functional skills and experiences in the key areas of quality, compliance, scale-up and technology transfer in moving clinical products to commercial stage add considerable expertise to the management team, as we navigate this pivotal point in the company's development," said Chris Garabedian, AVI's CEO and president. "We are excited to have Dr. Aphale join the team and look forward to his leadership and contributions in this important area."

Dr. Aphale commented, "I believe that AVI is at a transformational inflection point in pursuing its goal of becoming one of the top RNA-based therapeutic companies and serving the unmet medical needs in the rare disease and emerging infectious disease areas. With compelling clinical data from its DMD program, the company is now poised to move from a development-based focus to a commercial focus. I look forward to playing a key role in AVI's senior management team as we take the company to this next level."

Additionally, AVI today announced a reduction in the company's workforce by approximately 28% as part of an effort to streamline the organization's infrastructure, lower overall expenses and focus the company's resources on its main areas of focus in rare and infectious diseases. Mr. Garabedian commented, "We believe this restructuring will result in a more streamlined and efficient organization focused on our main value-driving programs in rare and infectious diseases."

### **About AVI BioPharma**

AVI BioPharma is focused on the discovery and development of novel RNA-based therapeutics for rare and infectious diseases, as well as other select disease targets. Applying pioneering technologies developed and optimized by AVI, the company is able to target a broad range of diseases and disorders through distinct RNA-based mechanisms of action. Unlike other RNA-based approaches, AVI's technologies can be used to directly target both messenger RNA (mRNA) and precursor messenger RNA (pre-mRNA) to either down-regulate (inhibit) or up-regulate (promote) the expression of targeted genes or proteins. By leveraging its highly differentiated RNA-based technology platform, AVI has built a pipeline of potentially transformative therapeutic agents, including eteplirsen, which is in clinical development for the treatment of Duchenne muscular dystrophy, and multiple drug candidates that are in clinical development for the treatment of infectious diseases. For more information, visit [www.avibio.com](http://www.avibio.com).

### **Forward-Looking Statements and Information**

In order to provide AVI's investors with an understanding of its current results and future prospects, this press release contains statements that are forward-looking. Any statements contained in this press release that are not statements of historical fact may be deemed to be forward-looking statements. Words such as "believes," "anticipates," "plans," "expects," "will," "intends," "potential," "possible" and similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements. These forward-looking

statements include statements about AVI's management and prospects, the development of AVI's product candidates, other antisense-based technology and the efficacy, potency and utility of AVI's product candidates in the treatment of rare and infectious diseases, and its potential to treat a broad number of human diseases, its ability to commercialize its product candidates and the impact of the workforce reduction on the company's operating results and prospects.

These forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties, many of which are beyond AVI's control. Known risk factors include, among others: clinical trials may not demonstrate safety and efficacy of any of AVI's drug candidates and/or AVI's antisense-based technology platform; any of AVI's drug candidates may fail in development, may not receive required regulatory approvals, or be delayed to a point where they do not become commercially viable; and the anticipated benefits from the workforce reduction may not be realized.

Any of the foregoing risks could materially and adversely affect AVI's business, results of operations and the trading price of AVI's common stock. For a detailed description of risks and uncertainties AVI faces, you are encouraged to review the official corporate documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. AVI does not undertake any obligation to publicly update its forward-looking statements based on events or circumstances after the date hereof.

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