AVI BioPharma, Inc. Appoints Chief Medical Officer

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For Immediate Release

PORTLAND, OR — February 12, 2009 — AVI BioPharma, Inc. (NASDAQ: AVII), a developer of RNA-based drugs, today announced the appointment of Stephen B. Shrewsbury, M.D., as Chief Medical Officer and Senior Vice President of Clinical and Regulatory Affairs.

Shrewsbury brings 30 years experience to AVI with a career spanning medical practice, research, clinical development and product commercialization. Most recently, Shrewsbury served as CMO and SVP Clinical Development and Regulatory Affairs for Adamas Pharmaceuticals. Prior to that, he served as VP Clinical and Regulatory Affairs and Chief Medical Officer for MAP Pharmaceuticals.

"Stephen joins AVI at a time when his experience can favorably impact our pipeline and clinical programs," said Leslie Hudson, Ph.D., President and Chief Executive Officer of AVI. “His extensive clinical and regulatory track record of success will serve us well as we advance AVI-4658 for the treatment of Duchenne muscular dystrophy and our other three clinical programs for the treatment of cardiovascular restenosis and Ebola and Marburg viral infections.”

Shrewsbury’s industry experience has also included several years at Chiron Corporation, after nine years with GlaxoSmithKline. Prior to joining the pharmaceutical industry he worked in the UK National Health Service for 13 years. He is a member or fellow of several US and UK institutions and holds diplomas at others, having qualified at the University of Liverpool Medical School (UK).

About AVI BioPharma

AVI BioPharma is focused on the discovery and development of RNA–based drugs utilizing proprietary derivatives of its antisense chemistry (morpholino-modified phosphorodiamidate oligomers or PMOs) that can be applied to a wide range of diseases and genetic disorders through several distinct mechanisms of action. Unlike other RNA-based therapeutic approaches, AVI’s antisense technology has been used to directly target both messenger RNA (mRNA) and its precursor (pre-mRNA), allowing for both up- and down-regulation of targeted genes and proteins. AVI’s RNA–based drug programs are being evaluated for the treatment of Duchenne muscular dystrophy as well as for the treatment of cardiovascular restenosis through our partner Global Therapeutics, a Cook Group Company. AVI’s antiviral programs have demonstrated promising outcomes in Ebola Zaire and Marburg Musoke virus infections and may prove applicable to other viral targets such as HCV or Dengue viruses. For more information, visit www.avibio.com.