



## **Avila Therapeutics, Inc. Closes \$30 Million Series B Financing**

**-- Company to Advance Novel Class of Protein-Silencing Covalent Drugs into Clinic Development --**

**Waltham, MA – July 27, 2009** – Avila Therapeutics, Inc., an emerging biotechnology company, announced today that it has raised \$30 million in a Series B equity financing. The Novartis Option Fund, a new investor, led the round and all existing Avila investors participated: Abingworth, Advent Venture Partners, Atlas Venture and Polaris Venture Partners. Avila’s powerful platform technology, which was designed to create a broad set of covalent drug product opportunities that fight disease through protein silencing, has demonstrated preclinical activity with two programs, one targeting hepatitis C virus protease and the other targeting Btk, an emerging target in autoimmune disease and certain cancers, and has also generated multiple additional early-stage programs across a range of targets.

“Avila’s innovations and proprietary know-how make it possible to intelligently pursue covalent drugs, a broad product class that has been underutilized to date. The Avila team has already developed promising drug candidates against important targets in cancer, autoimmune disease and hepatitis C, and we see opportunities for Avila’s platform to be applied to many target types across a range of diseases,” said Henry Skinner, Ph.D., Managing Director of the Novartis Option Fund. “I look forward to working with Avila’s leadership team as they move programs forward that have the potential to offer a truly significant advance over current treatments.”

“With the Novartis Option Fund we are very pleased to expand our circle of industry-leading investors,” said Katrine S. Bosley, CEO of Avila Therapeutics. “Avila has made tremendous progress in developing and demonstrating the promise of covalent drugs. This financing provides us with a strong financial foundation and firmly validates our investors’ belief in Avila’s future and the best-in-class potential of covalent drugs.”

Proceeds from the financing will be used to advance Avila’s first program into clinical development while continuing to advance the proprietary Avilomics™ drug discovery platform. In conjunction with this financing transaction, Henry Skinner, Ph.D., Managing Director of the Novartis Option Fund, has joined the Avila board of directors. He joins board members Daniel Lynch (Executive Chairman); Michael F. Bigham (Abingworth); Bruce L. Booth, D.Phil. (Atlas Venture); Katrine Bosley; Roy Lobb, D.Phil.; Amir Nashat, Ph.D. (Polaris Venture Partners); Raj Parekh, D.Phil. (Advent Venture Partners) and Vicki Sato, Ph.D.

### **About the Avilomics™ Platform and Covalent Drugs**

With broad applicability across multiple disease areas, the Avilomics platform is Avila’s powerful approach to design and develop selective drugs with superior pharmacology. The three components of Avilomics are: i) proprietary informatics technologies that uniquely identify sites amenable to selective

covalent modification and target silencing, ii) a unique library of highly selective chemistries for target silencing, and iii) design tools that integrate target analysis and covalent chemistry to create novel medicines.

Together, these components provide a platform for efficient design and testing that yields covalent drug candidates with broad applicability to a variety of targets and diseases. Using Avilomics, the company designs and develops covalent drugs that strongly, selectively, and resiliently bond to disease-causing proteins, thereby silencing their activity and producing superior pharmacological outcomes.

#### **About Avila Therapeutics™, Inc.**

Avila Therapeutics is developing an innovative and proprietary therapeutic approach to covalent drug development, called “protein silencing”. Avila’s science has the potential to deliver covalent drugs with unique therapeutic benefits because they are highly targeted, are effective against mutations in disease targets, and have long duration of action. The company is developing a pipeline of novel, protein-silencing covalent drugs with a current focus on viral infection, cancer and autoimmune disease. Avila is funded by leading venture capital firms: Abingworth, Advent Venture Partners, Atlas Ventures, Novartis Option Fund, and Polaris Venture Partners. For additional information, please visit <http://www.avilatx.com>.

#### **About the Novartis Option Fund**

The Novartis Option Fund is a \$200 million fund that is part of the Novartis Venture Funds. Established in 1996, the Novartis Venture Funds currently manage over \$650 million in committed capital and is invested in more than 50 private companies. The objective of the Novartis Option Fund is to seed innovative companies through initial and follow on investments. The initial investment is coupled with an option to a specific therapeutic program providing early validation for the company’s technology by a larger pharmaceutical partner. The Novartis Venture Funds’ team of eight investment professionals located in Basel, Switzerland and Cambridge, Massachusetts, brings together extensive expertise in the biotech and pharmaceutical industry and venture capital.

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