



## **AAVantgarde Appoints Michael Heffernan as Chairman of its Board of Directors**

*- Brings over 30 years of experience building private and public development-stage biopharmaceutical companies -*

**October 30, 2023** — AAVantgarde Bio (AAVantgarde), a clinical-stage, Italian-based international biotechnology company with two proprietary Adeno-Associated Viral (AAV) vector platforms for large gene delivery, today announced the appointment of Michael Heffernan as Chairman of the Board with immediate effect. Mr. Heffernan succeeds Dr. Ram Palanki, who will remain as a Board Director of AAVantgarde.

This appointment comes at a pivotal time for AAVantarde as the Company progresses its lead program towards the clinic and soon after raising a €61 million Series A financing as it seeks to bring its Adeno-Associated Viral (AAV) vector platforms to address the gene therapy cargo capacity limitations of AAV vectors.

“Mike’s wealth of expertise in the biotech sector has delivered transformative value to patients and outstanding financial outcomes for investors and will be invaluable during this exciting phase of growth for AAVantgarde,” **said Dr. Natalia Misciattelli, Chief Executive Officer of AAVantgarde.** “Mike’s proven leadership role in driving clinical programs will be invaluable as we progress our lead program towards the clinic, and I look forward to working closely with him in his role as our new Chairman.”

“I am delighted to be joining AAVantgarde at this important time in the Company’s development,” **said Mike Heffernan, Chairman of the Board of Directors at AAVantgarde.** “AAVantgarde is unlocking the value of AAV gene therapy for ocular diseases and beyond as a result of its breakthrough science. Together with a strong commercial strategy and an experienced management team led by CEO, Dr Natalia Misciattelli, the Company has already attracted significant investment from high calibre life science investors, and I look forward to working with Natalia and the Board to help build the business and drive shareholder value.”



Mr. Heffernan is a successful entrepreneur and biopharmaceutical leader with over 30 years' experience building development-stage and commercial biopharmaceutical companies. He is the CEO and Chairman of the US-based oncology company Avenge Bio, Inc. which he co-founded in 2019. Mr. Heffernan is also a board member of numerous public and private biotech companies including Biohaven Pharmaceutical Holding Co. Ltd. (NYSE: BHVN), Synlogic, Inc. (NASDAQ CM: SYBX), Trevi Therapeutics Inc. (NASDAQ: TRVI), Collegium Pharmaceutical, Inc. (NASDAQ: COLL), K36 Therapeutics (private) and NMD Pharma (private).

Mr. Heffernan has held numerous previous leadership positions during his career. Prior to co-founding Avenge Bio, he founded Collegium Pharmaceutical, Inc. a specialty pharmaceutical company in 2018 where he served as CEO and currently serves as Chairman. Other previous leadership positions include CEO of Onset Dermatology, a commercial-stage dermatology company that he founded and spun out of Collegium to create PreCision Dermatology, which was acquired by Valeant in 2014. He also co-founded and served as CEO of Clinical Studies Ltd., a pharmaceutical contract research organization that was acquired by PhyMatrix Corp. in 1997.

Mr. Heffernan began his career at Eli Lilly and Company where he served in numerous sales and marketing roles. He is a registered pharmacist and earned his B.Sc. Degree in Pharmacy from the University of Connecticut.

#### **About AAVantgarde Bio**

AAVantgarde Bio is a clinical stage, Italian headquartered, international biotechnology company that has developed two proprietary Adeno-Associated Viral (AAV) vector platforms to address the gene therapy cargo capacity limitations of AAV vectors. The AAVantgarde platforms could be used to deliver large genes to ocular and non-ocular tissues. Co-founded by Professor Alberto Auricchio at TIGEM (Telethon Institute of Genetics and Medicine) in Naples, Italy, and Telethon Foundation, AAVantgarde will initially validate the platform in the clinic in two inherited retinal diseases with clear unmet need. For more information, please visit: [www.aavantgardebio.com](http://www.aavantgardebio.com)

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