

## Avicanna Enters Strategic Partnership with Al Harrington's, Viola, for commercialization of Viola branded products in Canada

- *Purpose-driven cannabis brand rooted in social equity and justice to enter Canada*
- *Avicanna to lead commercialization through medical and consumer retail sales channels*
- *Viola intends to promote various social projects to advance education related to cannabis as well as Viola's pioneering initiatives to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the cannabis industry in Canada*

TORONTO, Mar. 23, 2021 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Avicanna Inc. ("**Avicanna**" or the "**Company**") (TSX: AVCN) (OTCQX: AVCNF) (FSE: 0NN), a biopharmaceutical company focused on the development, manufacturing and commercialization of plant-derived cannabinoid-based products, is pleased to announce that the Company has entered into an intellectual property licensing and royalty agreement with VB Brands California LLC ("**Viola**") (the "**Viola Agreement**") to use the Viola brand in connection with specific formulations developed by Avicanna that are intended to be commercialized in Canada through medical and consumer retail sales channels.



Founded by NBA veteran Al Harrington, Viola is leading the charge on minority participation and social equity in the US cannabis industry through its social equity and education initiative "Viola Cares". Through this partnership, Avicanna will manage the commercialization of Viola branded products in Canada (the "**Viola Products**") through the Company's manufacturing, distribution, and sales infrastructure, to provide ultra premium products into the Canadian cannabis market. The Viola Products will include specific formulations developed by Avicanna. Pursuant to the Viola Agreement, Avicanna will pay Viola a royalty for the use of the brand in Canada.

"We're so excited to announce the expansion of Viola's mission and reach into Canada with the help of the Avicanna team," says Al Harrington, CEO of Viola. "Their commitment to research and development of cannabis in the medical and pharmaceutical industries makes them the perfect

biotech partner to bring Viola's brand to our Northern neighbors, and we're looking forward to the bright future ahead."

In commenting on the Viola Agreement, Aras Azadian, CEO of Avicanna said, "through this partnership, we aim to expand and build on AI's vision for the cannabis industry and provide premium cannabis products in a socially and ethically responsible way. We are proud to partner with a like-minded organization that is focused on inclusion and social equity while providing a culturally-diverse society of Canadians with a brand that they can relate to."

To the knowledge of the Company, it is in compliance with all applicable laws in the jurisdictions in which it operates.

### **About VB Brands California LLC**

Founded in 2011 by NBA veteran AI Harrington, Viola is one of the nation's leading producers and licensed wholesalers of premium quality cannabis products. The brand is named after and inspired by AI's grandmother who suffers from glaucoma and diabetes, finding solace in cannabis remedies. Viola has integrated the latest cutting-edge technology with its own proprietary procedures designed for every stage of the cultivation, extraction and production process. The company is known for its wide variety of product offerings, from high-quality flower to premier butane extracts and operates in California, Colorado, Michigan, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Washington.

From representation to reform, Viola's mission is to create opportunities for communities of color in the cannabis industry. Through philanthropic initiatives, connecting with lawmakers to help draft policy, and partnering with key members of the community to spread the word through ambassadorship, Viola works from the ground up to ensure Black and brown citizens are afforded the opportunity to be part of a flourishing industry that historically has left them disenfranchised.

### **About Viola Cares**

Through education, equitable offerings, expungement, and incubation programs, the mission of Viola Cares is to increase minority representation, facilitate community building and provide greater employment opportunities to Black and other minority communities in cannabis. Viola intends to expand the reach of Viola Cares into Canada with educational initiatives to increase the awareness of safe cannabis use.

### **About Avicanna Inc.**

Avicanna is a diversified and vertically integrated Canadian biopharmaceutical company focused on the research, development, and commercialization of plant-derived cannabinoid-based products for the global consumer, medical, and pharmaceutical market segments.

Avicanna is an established leader in cannabinoid research and development, which it primarily conducts at its R&D headquarters in the Johnson & Johnson Innovation Centre, JLABS @ Toronto, Canada and in collaboration with leading Canadian academic and medical institutions. In addition to its developing pharmaceutical pipeline, Avicanna's team of experts have developed and commercialized several industry leading product lines, including:

- Pura Earth™ or Pura H&W™: an advanced and clinically tested line of CBD consumer derma-cosmetic products; and,
- RHO Phyto™: an advanced line of medical cannabis products containing varying ratios of CBD and THC currently available nation-wide across Canada in partnership with Medical

Cannabis by Shoppers™, a subsidiary of Shoppers Drug Mart. RHO Phyto is the first strictly medical formulary of advanced “Cannabis 2.0” products, containing oils, sprays, capsules, creams, and gels, all 2 developed with scientific rigour, manufactured under GMP standards and supported by pre-clinical data.

With ongoing clinical trials on its derma-cosmetic (branded as Pura Earth or Pura H&W), medical cannabis (branded as RHO Phyto) and a pipeline of pharmaceutical products, Avicanna’s dedication to researching the important role that cannabinoids play in an increasingly wider scope of products has been at the core of the Company’s vision since its inception. Furthermore, Avicanna’s commitment to education is demonstrated through its annual medical symposium, the Avicanna Academy educational platform, and the My Cannabis Clinic patient program through its subsidiary company.

Avicanna manages its own supply chain including cultivation and extraction through its two majority-owned subsidiaries, Sativa Nativa S.A.S. and Santa Marta Golden Hemp S.A.S., both located in Santa Marta, Colombia. Through these sustainable, economical, and industrial scale subsidiaries, Avicanna cultivates, processes, and commercializes a range of cannabis and hemp cultivars dominant in CBD, CBG, THC, and other cannabinoids for use as active pharmaceutical ingredients. Avicanna’s Avesta Genetica program specializes in the development and optimization of rare cultivars for commercial production along with feminized seeds for global export. In June 2020, Avicanna made history with a shipment of hemp seeds to the United States of America by completing the first ever export of hemp seeds from Colombia.

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For more information about Avicanna, visit [www.avicanna.com](http://www.avicanna.com), call 1-647-243-5283, or contact Setu Purohit, President by email at [info@avicanna.com](mailto:info@avicanna.com).

The company posts updates through videos from the official company YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5yBcINIsNf7VrE34iwt8OA>.

Please join the conversation on our Avicanna supporter’s telegram group at <https://t.me/Avicannainc>.

### **Cautionary Note Regarding Forward-Looking Information and Statements**

*This news release contains "forward-looking information" within the meaning of applicable securities laws. Forward-looking information contained in this press release may be identified by the use of words such as, "may", "would", "could", "will", "likely", "expect", "anticipate", "believe", "intend", "plan", "forecast", "project", "estimate", "outlook" and other similar expressions, and includes statements with respect to the Company’s ability to commercialize Viola Products in Canada through its medical and consumer retail sales channels, the ability of the Company to commercialize the Viola Products through the Company’s manufacturing, distribution, and sales infrastructure, and the Company’s ability to provide premium cannabis products in a socially and ethically responsible way. Forward-looking information is not a guarantee of future performance and is based upon a number of estimates and assumptions of management in light of management’s experience and perception of trends, current conditions and expected developments, as well as other factors relevant in the circumstances, including assumptions in respect of current and future market conditions, the current and future regulatory environment; and the availability of licenses, approvals and permits.*

*Although the Company believes that the expectations and assumptions on which such forward-looking information is based are reasonable, undue reliance should not be placed on the forward-looking information because the Company can give no assurance that they will prove to be correct. Actual results and developments may differ materially from those contemplated by these statements. Forward-looking information is subject to a variety of risks and uncertainties that could cause actual events or results to differ materially from those projected in the forward-looking information. Such risks and uncertainties include, but are not limited to current and future market conditions, including the market price of the common shares of the Company, and the risk factors set out in the Company's annual information form dated April 15, 2020 and final short form prospectus dated November 27, 2020, filed with the Canadian securities regulators and available under the Company's profile on SEDAR at [www.sedar.com](http://www.sedar.com).*

*The statements in this press release are made as of the date of this release. The Company disclaims any intent or obligation to update any forward-looking information, whether as a result of new information, future events or results or otherwise, other than as required by applicable securities laws.*