



Athersys to Host Investor Day in New York City

April 15, 2019

Special Event to be Held Tuesday, May 14, 2019

CLEVELAND, Ohio, April 15, 2019 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Athersys, Inc. (Nasdaq: ATHX) announced today that the company will host an investor day on Tuesday, May 14, 2019. The event will focus on the Company's mission, core capabilities and technologies, as well as progress made on developing its MultiStem® product platform and plans for the future. The investor day will include presentations from the Company's management team as well as experts in the fields of stroke and ARDS. Dr. David Chiu, MD, FAHA, Medical Director at the Eddy Scurlock Stroke Center at Houston Methodist Hospital will be discussing the MASTERS-2 clinical trial for stroke. Dr. Geoff Bellington, Medical Director at University College London Hospitals, will be discussing the MUST-ARDS clinical trial. Ms. Eileen Rubin, President of the ARDS Foundation and ARDS survivor, will also share perspective on ARDS and the severe impact it has on patients.

The meeting will commence at 8:00 am ET and conclude at 10:30 am ET. This event is open to all current stockholders and interested investors. Advanced registration is required to attend, as space will be limited. Interested attendees may email irevent@athersys.com and provide their full name and institutional affiliation, if applicable. Registered guests will receive a confirmation email within two business days.

About Ischemic Stroke

Stroke represents an area where the clinical need is particularly significant, since it is a leading cause of death and serious disability worldwide, with a substantially impaired quality of life for many stroke victims. Currently, there are nearly 17 million people who suffer a stroke globally and more than two million stroke victims each year in the United States, Europe and Japan, combined. Ischemic strokes, which represent the most common form of stroke, are caused by a blockage of blood flow in the brain that cuts off the supply of oxygen and nutrients and can result in long-term or permanent disability due to neurological damage. Unfortunately, current therapeutic options for ischemic stroke victims are limited, since the only available treatments, administration of the clot dissolving agent tPA, or "thrombolytic," or surgical intervention to remove the clot, must be conducted within several hours of the occurrence of the stroke. As a consequence of this limited time window, only a small percentage of stroke victims are treated with the currently available therapy—most simply receive supportive or "palliative" care. The long-term costs of stroke are substantial, with many patients requiring extended hospitalization, extended physical therapy or rehabilitation (for those patients that are capable of entering such programs), and many require long-term institutional or family care.

About ARDS

Acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) is a serious immunological and inflammatory condition characterized by widespread inflammation in the lungs. ARDS can be triggered by pneumonia, sepsis, trauma or other events and represents a major cause of morbidity and mortality in the critical care setting. It has significant implications, as it prolongs intensive care unit (ICU) and hospital stays and requires convalescence in the hospital and rehabilitation. There are limited interventions and no effective drug treatments for ARDS, making it an area of high unmet clinical need with high treatment costs. Given ARDS high treatment costs, a successful cell therapy could be expected to generate significant savings for the healthcare system by reducing days on a ventilator and in the ICU and importantly, could reduce mortality and improve quality of life for those suffering from the condition. The medical need for a safe and effective treatment of ARDS is significant due to its high mortality rate, and it affects annually approximately 400,000 - 500,000 patients in Europe, the United States and Japan.

MultiStem cell therapy has demonstrated the capacity to reduce inflammation, support tissue regeneration and promote homeostasis in acute immunological and injury settings. Preclinical data suggests that MultiStem cells may have a protective effect by shifting the physiological response from pro-inflammatory to anti-inflammatory, and through the promotion of key reparative mechanisms. In animal models, MultiStem cells have demonstrated an ability to reduce inflammation, reduce fluid retention in the lungs and return lung function to normal. Intravenous MultiStem treatment early following the onset of ARDS may ameliorate the initial inflammation and reduce the fibrotic activity that follows, thereby speeding the return to and improving the likelihood of more normal lung function and helping patient recovery.

About MultiStem

MultiStem cell therapy is a patented regenerative medicine product in clinical development that has shown the ability to promote tissue repair and healing in a variety of ways, such as through the production of therapeutic factors produced in response to signals of inflammation and tissue damage. MultiStem therapy's potential for multidimensional therapeutic impact distinguishes it from traditional biopharmaceutical therapies focused on a single mechanism of benefit. The therapy represents a unique "off-the-shelf" stem cell product that can be manufactured in a scalable manner, may be stored for years in frozen form, and is administered without tissue matching or the need for immune suppression. Based upon its efficacy profile, its novel mechanisms of action, and a favorable and consistent safety profile demonstrated in clinical studies, MultiStem therapy could provide a meaningful benefit to patients, including those suffering from serious diseases and conditions with unmet medical need.

About Athersys

Athersys is an international biotechnology company engaged in the discovery and development of therapeutic product candidates designed to extend and enhance the quality of human life. The Company is developing its MultiStem cell therapy product, a patented, adult-derived "off-the-shelf" stem cell product, initially for disease indications in the neurological, cardiovascular, and inflammatory and immune disease areas, and has several ongoing

clinical trials evaluating this potential regenerative medicine product. Athersys has forged strategic partnerships and a broad network of collaborations to further advance the MultiStem cell therapy toward commercialization. More information is available at www.athersys.com.

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