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Astex President Awarded Prous Institute-Overton and Meyer Award for New Technologies in Drug Discovery

DUBLIN, Calif., Aug. 20, 2012 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Astex Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (Nasdaq:ASTX), a pharmaceutical company dedicated to the discovery and development of novel small molecule therapeutics, today announced that its president and director, Harren Jhoti, PhD, will be presented with the 2012 Prous Institute-Overton and Meyer Award for New Technologies in Drug Discovery by the European Federation for Medicinal Chemistry. The biennial award recognizes research and innovation with respect to technology in drug discovery.

"I am honored to be bestowed this award by the Executive Committee of the European Federation for Medicinal Chemistry," said Dr. Jhoti. "This award recognizes the leading position that the Astex team has established in fragment-based drug discovery, a technique now widely used by the pharmaceutical sector to discover high quality drug candidates. It is my hope that our contributions to fragment-based drug discovery will help to produce effective medicines."

Dr. Jhoti will be presented with the award at the 2012 meeting of the European Federation for Medicinal Chemistry - International Symposium on Medicinal Chemistry (EFMC-ISMC) in Berlin, Germany September 2 - 6, 2012, and will give a keynote lecture.

About Harren Jhoti, PhD

Dr. Harren Jhoti has served as Astex Pharmaceuticals president and member of the Board of Directors since the company's formation in July 2011. He co-founded Astex Therapeutics in 1999 and was chief scientific officer until November 2007 when he was appointed chief executive. Dr. Jhoti was named by the Royal Society of Chemistry as "Chemistry World Entrepreneur of the Year" for 2007. He has published widely including in leading journals such as *Nature* and *Science* and has also been featured in *TIME* magazine after being named by the World Economic Forum a Technology Pioneer in 2005. Dr. Jhoti served as a non-executive director of Iconix Inc. Before starting up Astex Therapeutics in 1999, he was head of Structural Biology and Bioinformatics at GlaxoWellcome in the United Kingdom (1991-1999). Prior to Glaxo, Dr. Jhoti was a post-doctoral scientist at Oxford University. He received a BSc (Hons) in Biochemistry in 1985 and a PhD in Protein Crystallography from the University of London in 1989.

About Astex Pharmaceuticals

Astex Pharmaceuticals is dedicated to the discovery and development of novel small molecule therapeutics with a focus on oncology. The Company is developing a proprietary pipeline of novel therapies and is creating de-risked products for partnership with leading pharmaceutical companies. Astex Pharmaceuticals developed Dacogen® (decitabine) for Injection and receives significant royalties on global sales.

For more information about Astex Pharmaceuticals, Inc., please visit http://www.astx.com.

The Astex Pharmaceuticals, Inc. logo is available at http://www.globenewswire.com/newsroom/prs/?pkgid=12273

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