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Acucela Appoints Glen Y. Sato to Board of Directors

BOTHELL, Wash. (September 9, 2009) – Acucela, a clinical-stage biotechnology company focused on developing new treatments for blinding eye diseases, announced today the appointment of Glen Y. Sato, a partner in the Life Sciences and Corporate practice groups of the law firm Cooley Godward Kronish LLP, to its Board of Directors.

“We are pleased to welcome Glen to our Board of Directors,” said Ryo Kubota, M.D., Ph.D., Acucela’s chairman, president and chief executive officer. “Glen brings extensive experience with financial and corporate transactions in the pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical fields, and his strategic insights will be instrumental as we continue to advance our pipeline. The appointment of Glen to our board is another step for Acucela toward our vision of building a fully integrated pharmaceutical company with the ongoing commitment of our partner and our investors.”

Mr. Sato rejoined the Palo Alto, Calif. offices of Cooley Godward Kronish in 2006 and brings to Acucela significant experience with corporate transactions, intellectual property licensing and licensing strategy, general corporate counseling and corporate partnering involving leading pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. Prior to joining the firm, Mr. Sato was Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of Protein Design Labs, Inc. (PDL). Throughout his career, he has served in various legal, financial, operational and strategic planning positions at PDL, Exelixis and NeXT Computer, Inc. He began his career as an attorney at Cooley Godward Kronish in Palo Alto and Jones, Day in Washington, D.C. Mr. Sato received his J.D. and M.B.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles. He received his B.S. degree from Wesleyan University.

“The opportunity to join the Board of Directors of Acucela is very exciting,” said Mr. Sato. “I have been impressed with Acucela’s promising product candidates, innovative technology and the company’s novel approach to treating blinding eye diseases. I look forward to working with Acucela’s board and the executive management team to help the Company achieve its mission of creating safe and effective eye treatments for patients that so desperately need them.”

About Acucela Inc.

Acucela Inc. is a clinical-stage biotechnology company focused on leveraging promising science in visual cycle modulation (VCM) to develop new methods for treating blinding eye diseases that affect tens of millions of people worldwide. The company's orally-delivered VCM therapies, which selectively target cells within the retina to protect visual acuity, have the potential to be used to treat several devastating eye diseases, including dry age-related macular degeneration (AMD), retinopathy of prematurity, Stargardt disease and diabetic retinopathy. Acucela is also developing, with Otsuka Pharmaceutical, Rebamipide ophthalmic suspension, a Phase 3 product candidate for dry eye. For more information, please visit www.Acucela.com.

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