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Acucela CEO and Founder Selected as One of Seattle Business Magazine's Top 25 Innovators & Entrepreneurs

BOTHELL, Wash. (October 23, 2009) – Acucela, a clinical-stage biotechnology company focused on developing new treatments for blinding eye diseases, announced today that Ryo Kubota, M.D., Ph.D., Acucela's founder, chairman, president and chief executive officer, has been honored by *Seattle Business* magazine as one of its 2009 Top 25 Innovators & Entrepreneurs.

"I am very honored by this recognition and to be included in such a talented group of men and women," stated Dr. Kubota. "The Seattle biotechnology hub and the broader Washington region is home to many innovative companies and individuals. At Acucela, we are excited and proud to be part of a community that thrives on and supports this entrepreneurial spirit."

Dr. Kubota is a pioneer in the ophthalmology field and the discoverer of the gene that causes glaucoma. Dr. Kubota founded Acucela in 2002 in Bothell, Washington. The company is working to create promising treatments for blinding eye diseases, including dry eye and dry age-related macular degeneration ("dry" AMD), which is the leading cause of vision loss in people over the age of 50. In an effort to educate patients on preventative measures to ensure eye health and the next generation of cutting edge therapies to treat blinding eye diseases, Dr. Kubota has created www.DrRyo.com, an online forum for information and discussions in the ophthalmology community.

Executives from more than 125 companies were nominated this year for the *Seattle Business* Top 25 Innovators & Entrepreneurs Awards, and the winners were chosen by an advisory board of executives and leaders from the Washington region. A full list of the winners of the 2009 Top 25 Innovator & Entrepreneur Award winners will be printed in the November issue of *Seattle Business* and online at seattlebusinessmag.com. Photos from the event will be available on the *Seattle Business* website.

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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