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## **Biotech Company Acucela Inc. Secures \$25M in additional Financing**

**SEATTLE – April, 2007** – Acucela Inc., a Seattle based biotechnology company focused on discovery and development of treatments for blinding eye diseases, today announced the completion of a \$25 million financing round. The round was led by several funds operated by SBI Investment Co., Ltd., who is wholly owned by SBI Holdings, Inc. which made its first significant investment in an American biotechnology company when it invested in Acucela in 2004. Otsuka Pharmaceutical Factory, Inc. has also participated in the financing round with \$5M.

The severity and prevalence of retinal eye diseases are increasing as the world's population ages. Today there are few treatment options available to patients. Age-Related Macular degeneration (AMD) is a chronic, progressive eye disorder that mainly affects people over the age of 60. AMD is the leading cause of blindness in the Western world and the third most common cause of blindness globally, after cataract and glaucoma. Acucela's initial focus is on treating the dry form of AMD, which accounts for about 90 percent of all AMD cases. Currently there are no approved treatments for dry AMD.

"Acucela's objectives and capabilities fit squarely with our investment strategies," said Mr. Yoshitaka Kitao, representative director and CEO of SBI Holdings, Inc. and a member of Acucela's Board of Directors. "The company is focused on meeting the needs of a huge and growing patient population, and Dr. Kubota has put together a team of highly-qualified scientists and executives determined to solve an extremely important unmet medical need. We look forward to continuing to support Acucela's progress."

Acucela has assembled a team of worldwide experts in retinal disease and the visual cycle to develop novel approaches to treating retinal degenerative diseases. Additionally, a proprietary cell-based screening technology called OcuScreen™ helps Acucela identify effective new drug candidates as well as detect toxicity of compounds without the use of live animals.

"The support and backing of our investors is extremely encouraging to us," said Dr. Ryo Kubota. "This additional funding will enable us to continue to go forward in bringing our compounds through clinical trials in the hopes of treating diseases that damage the eyesight and the quality of life of millions of people worldwide."

### **About Acucela**

Acucela is a biotechnology company that discovers and develops treatments for blinding eye diseases. The company's novel approaches has significant therapeutic potential to treat retinal diseases such as Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD), Stargardt's disease and glaucoma, which significantly affect the sight of 50 million people worldwide. The Seattle-based company was founded in 2002. For more information, please visit <http://www.acucela.com>.

### **Acucela Forward-Looking Statement**

This press release contains "forward-looking statements" as that term is defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These statements involve risks and uncertainties, which may cause results to differ materially from those set forth in the statements. The forward-looking statements include statements regarding product development. No forward-looking statement can be guaranteed, and actual results may differ materially from those projected. Acucela undertakes

no obligation to publicly update any forward-looking statement, whether as a result of new information, future events, or otherwise.

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