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Acucela founder to speak at BioVentures conference

Dr. Kubota to discuss blinding eye disease therapy as one of featured speakers

BOTHELL, WA-April 7, 2009 – Acucela founder and CEO Dr. Ryo Kubota will discuss the company's work toward developing a treatment for age-related blindness at a conference that attracts a mix of biotechnical, pharmaceutical and venture capital executives, the company announced today.

Acucela plans to begin Phase II trials this summer on ACU-4429, an innovative oral therapy to cure diseases that most commonly cause age-related macular degeneration (AMD). Dr. Kubota will discuss the company's clinical findings related to the drug's development Thursday at the 11th Annual C21 BioVentures conference in Napa, Calif.

"Acucela is developing a therapy that will potentially prevent blindness in tens of millions of people," Dr. Kubota said. "This less-invasive treatment would dramatically improve the quality of life for people around the world as they age."

C21 BioVentures attracts senior biotechnology, pharmaceutical, and venture capital executives to hear presentations from representatives of the world's most innovative private companies. Acucela, based in Bothell, Wash., is developing ACU-4429 in partnership with Otsuka Pharmaceutical, Co., Ltd., a large Japanese company.

AMD afflicts 30 million people worldwide and is the leading cause of blindness in the aging population. Dr. Kubota is scheduled to present on Thursday at 1:30 p.m. at the Meritage Resort.

About Acucela

Acucela Inc. is a clinical-stage biotechnology company focused on developing new drug therapies for blinding eye diseases such as age-related macular degeneration (AMD), Stargardt disease, diabetic retinopathy and retinopathy of prematurity, as well as dry eye. Founded in 2002, Acucela works with proprietary disease-specific assays and technologies to identify and develop compounds that may safely and effectively treat retinal diseases. For more information, please visit www.acucela.com.

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