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Acucela hires head of clinical development and regulatory affairs

Veteran biotech executive Nancy Boman joins growing clinical stage Seattle-area company

BOTHELL, WA-March 30, 2009 – Acucela Inc., a biotechnology company developing innovative therapies for blinding eye diseases, has hired an experienced regulatory affairs executive to oversee its clinical development effort, the company announced today.

Dr. Nancy Boman joins Acucela as vice president of clinical development and regulatory affairs. Dr. Boman has successfully filed clinical trial applications in the U.S., Europe, Canada, Russia and Peru during her nearly two decades of regulatory affairs experience.

“Dr. Boman adds a strong background in regulatory strategy that will be extremely important as we pursue a treatment for the leading cause of blindness in the aging population,” said Dr. Ryo Kubota, founder and CEO of Acucela. “Her expertise will help our growth and evolution as a specialty pharmaceutical company focused on treating degenerative eye conditions.”

Acucela has two drug therapies in development and plans to more than double its 20-employee staff. ACU-4429, an oral treatment for age-related macular degeneration, is preparing to enter Phase II trials this year. Rebamipide, a topical treatment for dry eye disease, is in Phase III trials.

Dr. Boman comes to Acucela as a veteran of several West Coast biotech companies, most recently overseeing clinical development and regulatory affairs for Cell Therapeutics in Seattle. She has also worked in regulatory affairs capacities at Cytokinetics and Genentech in San Francisco, Amgen in Thousand Oaks, Calif., and AnorMED and QLT Inc. in British Columbia.

During the past 19 years, Dr. Boman has played a key role in successfully submitting 15 drug applications for approval, including Visudyne while at QLT. She has built two regulatory affairs departments from startup.

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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