

☐ Check this box if no longer subject to Section 16. Form 4 or Form 5 obligations may continue. See Instruction 1(b).

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP

Filed pursuant to Section 16(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 or Section 30(h) of the Investment Company Act of 1940

| OMB APPROVAL | |
|--|-----------|
| OMB Number: | 3235-0287 |
| Estimated average burden hours per response: | 0.5 |

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|--|---|---|
| 1. Name and Address of Reporting Person * <u>THANGARAJ IMMANUEL</u> (Last) (First) (Middle) <u>21 WATERWAY, SUITE 225</u> (Street) <u>THE WOODLANDS TX 773800</u> (City) (State) (Zip) | 2. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol <u>ACURA PHARMACEUTICALS, INC [ACUR]</u> | 5. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer (Check all applicable) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Director 10% Owner Officer (give title below) Other (specify below) |
| | 3. Date of Earliest Transaction (Month/Day/Year) <u>01/02/2009</u> | |
| | 4. If Amendment, Date of Original Filed (Month/Day/Year) | 6. Individual or Joint/Group Filing (Check Applicable Line) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Form filed by One Reporting Person Form filed by More than One Reporting Person |

Table I - Non-Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned

| 1. Title of Security (Instr. 3) | 2. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year) | 2A. Deemed Execution Date, if any (Month/Day/Year) | 3. Transaction Code (Instr. 8) | | 4. Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed Of (D) (Instr. 3, 4 and 5) | | | 5. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned Following Reported Transaction(s) (Instr. 3 and 4) | 6. Ownership Form: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 4) | 7. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 4) |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|---|------------|-------|---|--|---|
| | | | Code | V | Amount | (A) or (D) | Price | | | |

Table II - Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned (e.g., puts, calls, warrants, options, convertible securities)

| 1. Title of Derivative Security (Instr. 3) | 2. Conversion or Exercise Price of Derivative Security | 3. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year) | 3A. Deemed Execution Date, if any (Month/Day/Year) | 4. Transaction Code (Instr. 8) | | 5. Number of Derivative Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) (Instr. 3, 4 and 5) | | 6. Date Exercisable and Expiration Date (Month/Day/Year) | | 7. Title and Amount of Securities Underlying Derivative Security (Instr. 3 and 4) | | 8. Price of Derivative Security (Instr. 5) | 9. Number of derivative Securities Beneficially Owned Following Reported Transaction(s) (Instr. 4) | 10. Ownership Form: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 4) | 11. Nature of Indirect Beneficial Ownership (Instr. 4) |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|--|-----|--|-----------------|---|----------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| | | | | Code | V | (A) | (D) | Date Exercisable | Expiration Date | Title | Amount or Number of Shares | | | | |
| Director Stock Options | \$7.48 ⁽¹⁾ | 01/02/2009 | | A | | 15,000 | | (2) | 01/01/2019 | Common Stock | 15,000 | (3) | 15,000 | D | |

Explanation of Responses:

1. Exercise price is closing price of Issuer's common stock on January 2, 2009.

2. Twenty-five percent (25%) of shares underlying options vest on, and are exercisable commencing, each of March 31, 2009, June 30, 2009, September 30, 2009 and December 31, 2009.

3. Not Applicable.

Remarks:

/s/ Immanuel Thangaraj

01/02/2009

** Signature of Reporting Person

Date

Reminder: Report on a separate line for each class of securities beneficially owned directly or indirectly.

* If the form is filed by more than one reporting person, see Instruction 4 (b)(v).

** Intentional misstatements or omissions of facts constitute Federal Criminal Violations See 18 U.S.C. 1001 and 15 U.S.C. 78ff(a).

Note: File three copies of this Form, one of which must be manually signed. If space is insufficient, see Instruction 6 for procedure.

Persons who respond to the collection of information contained in this form are not required to respond unless the form displays a currently valid OMB Number.