

| OMB APPROVAL                                 |           |
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**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

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

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Name and Address of Reporting Person*<br><u>SKELLY WILLIAM G</u><br><br>(Last) (First) (Middle)<br><u>ACURA PHARMACEUTICALS, INC.</u><br><u>616 N. NORTH COURT, SUITE 120</u><br><br>(Street)<br><u>PALATINE IL 60067</u><br><br>(City) (State) (Zip) | 2. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol<br><u>ACURA PHARMACEUTICALS, INC [ ACUR ]</u> | 5. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer (Check all applicable)<br><br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Director 10% Owner<br>Officer (give title below) Other (specify below) |
|  | 3. Date of Earliest Transaction (Month/Day/Year)<br><u>05/25/2021</u>                     |   |
| 4. If Amendment, Date of Original Filed (Month/Day/Year)   |   |   |

**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 |
| <u>Restricted Stock Units (2021 Plan)</u>  | <u>(1)(2)</u>  | <u>05/25/2021</u>                    |  | <u>A</u>                       |   | <u>66,666</u>  |     | <u>(4)</u>   | <u>(4)</u>      | <u>Common Stock</u>   | <u>66,666</u>                              | <u>(3)</u>   | <u>66,666</u>   | <u>D</u>   |       |

**Explanation of Responses:**

1. Par value of \$.01 per share must be paid by Reporting Person upon exchange of Restricted Stock Units for stock.

2. 1 - for - 1

3. N/A

4. 50% of Restricted Stock Units vest on the last day of June 2021, while 25% of Restricted Stock Units vest on the last day of September 2021 and December 2021, subject to immediate vesting in the event of a change of control and certain other events. Reporting Person may elect to exchange up to 40% of Restricted Stock Units for cash and the remaining Restricted Stock Units will be exchanged on a one for one basis for common stock, in each case upon payment of, or deduction of par value. Distributions in respect of vested Restricted Stock Units will be made on the first business day of January 2022, or earlier upon a change of control.

/s/ William G. Skelly

05/25/2021

\*\* 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.