

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20549

FORM 8-K

CURRENT REPORT
Pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the
Securities Exchange Act Of 1934

December15, 2008
Date of Report (Date of earliest event reported)

ACURA PHARMACEUTICALS, INC.
(Exact Name of Registrant as Specified in Charter)

State of New York
(State of Other Jurisdiction
of Incorporation)

1-10113
(Commission File Number)

11-0853640
(I.R.S. Employer
Identification Number)

616 N. North Court, Suite 120
Palatine, Illinois 60067
(Address of principal executive offices) (Zip Code)

(847) 705-7709
(Registrant's telephone number, including area code)

Check the appropriate box below if the Form 8-K filing is intended to simultaneously satisfy the filing obligation of the registrant under any of the following provisions (see General Instruction A.2. below):

- ☐ Written communications pursuant to Rule 425 under the Securities Act (17 CFR 230.425)
 - ☐ Soliciting material pursuant to Rule 14a-12 under the Exchange Act (17CFR 240.14a-12)
 - ☐ Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 14d-2(b) under the Exchange Act (17CFR240.14d-2(b))
 - ☐ Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 13e-4(c) under the Exchange Act (17CFR 240.13e-4(c))
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Item 5.02

Departure of Directors or Principal Officers, Election of Directors,
Appointment of Certain Officers; Compensatory Arrangements of Certain Officers.

(e)

On December 15, 2008, we awarded cash bonuses for 2008 to the named executive officers listed below in the amounts provided:

| Name | Title | 2008 Bonus Awarded |
|-------------------|--|--------------------|
| Andrew D. Reddick | President and Chief Executive Officer | \$328,500 |
| Ron J. Spivey | Senior Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer | \$630,000* |
| Robert B. Jones | Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer | \$130,500 |
| Peter A. Clemens | Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer | \$102,500 |
| James F. Emigh | Vice President Marketing and Administration | \$40,000 |
| Robert A. Seiser | Vice President, Controller and Treasurer | \$56,000 |

* Includes a \$315,000 retention bonus to which Dr. Spivey is entitled pursuant to his Executive Employment Agreement if he remains employed by us through December 31, 2008.

SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the registrant has duly caused this report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned thereunto duly authorized.

ACURA PHARMACEUTICALS, INC.

By: /s/ Peter A. Clemens

Peter A. Clemens

Senior Vice President & Chief Financial Officer

Date: December 18, 2008