

| OMB APPROVAL | |
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STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP

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

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

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1. Name and Address of Reporting Person* <u>CLEMENS PETER A</u> (Last) (First) (Middle) <u>C/O ACURA PHARMACEUTICALS, INC.</u> <u>616 N. NORTH COURT, SUITE 120</u> (Street) <u>PALATINE IL 60067</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) Director _____ 10% Owner _____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Officer (give title below) _____ Other (specify below) _____ <p style="text-align: center;">Senior VP & CFO</p> |
| | 3. Date of Earliest Transaction (Month/Day/Year) <u>01/04/2021</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 | | | |
| Common Stock | 01/04/2021 | | M ⁽¹⁾ | | 49,334 | A | ⁽²⁾ | 410,711 ⁽³⁾ | D | |
| Common Stock | 01/04/2021 | | F | | 19,514 ⁽⁶⁾ | D | \$0.21 | 391,197 ⁽³⁾ | D | |

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 |
| Restricted Stock Unit (2017 Plan) | \$0.01 ⁽²⁾ | 01/04/2021 | | M | | 9,334 | | ⁽⁵⁾ | ⁽⁵⁾ | Common Stock | 9,334 | ⁽⁴⁾ | 129,332 | D | |
| Restricted Stock Unit (2017 Plan) | \$0.01 ⁽²⁾ | 01/04/2021 | | M | | 40,000 | | ⁽⁷⁾ | ⁽⁷⁾ | Common Stock | 40,000 | ⁽⁴⁾ | 89,332 | D | |

Explanation of Responses:

- Represents exchange of restricted stock units.
- Par value of \$.01 must be paid by Reporting Person upon exchange of Restricted Stock Units for stock.
- Does not include Restricted Stock Units.
- Not Applicable.
- 28,000 Restricted Stock Units were granted on December 11, 2017 and were 100% vested on December 11, 2018. Distributions in respect of this vested Restricted Stock Units will be made in three equal installments on the first business day of each of January 2020, 2021, and 2022 or earlier upon a qualifying change of control which also meets certain criteria of Section 409A of the Internal Revenue Code.
- Shares of common stock of the Issuer withheld by the Issuer in satisfaction of the Reporting Person's par value purchase price and tax withholdings on the exchange of 49,334 Restricted Stock Units for common stock of the Issuer.
- 120,000 Restricted Stock Units were granted on December 11, 2018 and were 100% vested on December 11, 2019. Distributions in respect of this vested Restricted Stock Units will be made in three equal installments on the first business day of each of January 2021, 2022, and 2023 or earlier upon a qualifying change of control which also meets certain criteria of Section 409A of the Internal Revenue Code.

/s/ Peter A. Clemens 01/06/2021
 ** 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.