Acura Pharmaceuticals
Awarded Key U.S. Patent for Abuse Deterrent Drug Formulations

Patent Estate Now Broadly Covers Abuse Deterrent Forms of Opioid Analgesics and Certain Other Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients

PALATINE, Ill, September 27, 2011: Acura Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (NASDAQ: ACUR), a specialty pharmaceutical company innovating abuse deterrent drugs, today announced that the company has been issued U.S. Patent No. 7,981,439 by the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

Claims in the patent, titled "Methods and compositions for deterring abuse of drugs susceptible to abuse and dosage forms thereof," cover Acura's AVERSION polymer matrix technology when utilized with any water soluble drug of abuse. The opioid, stimulant and benzodiazepine products being developed by Acura are covered by this newly issued patent.

"This patent broadens Acura's already strong intellectual property estate," commented Bob Jones, President & Chief Executive Officer of Acura Pharmaceuticals. "We are committed to developing solutions for physicians who need effective medications for their patients but are concerned about potential abuse of opioids, stimulants and tranquilizers. Our abuse deterrent products have the potential to mitigate this risk for doctors and provide another tool to combat the serious public health and safety issues associated with the abuse and misuse of oxycodone and other drugs."

The Company has formulated products that contain polymers causing the drug to create a gel when dissolved with the intent of preventing injection. Additionally, these formulations include a compound that irritates the nose when crushed with the intent to deter snorting. Abuse of opioid pain relievers is estimated at over 12 million individuals annually while tranquilizers and stimulants account for 5.5 million and 3.1 million annual abusers, respectively.

About Acura Pharmaceuticals
Acura Pharmaceuticals is a specialty pharmaceutical company engaged in the research, development and commercialization of product candidates intended to deter medication abuse and misuse, utilizing its proprietary AVERSION and IMPEDE technologies. In June 2011, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved an opioid containing product incorporating the AVERSION technology. The Company has a development pipeline of additional AVERSION technology products including other opioids, stimulants and benzodiazepines and its IMPEDE technology for pseudoephedrine hydrochloride products.

Forward-Looking Statements

Certain statements in this press release constitute "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Such forward-looking statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors which may cause our actual results, performance or achievements to be materially different from any future results, performance, or achievements expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements may include, but are not limited to, the ability of Pfizer (to whom we have licensed our Aversion® Technology for certain opioid analgesic products in the United States, Canada and Mexico) to successfully launch and commercialize such products, the ability of Pfizer and the ability of other pharmaceutical companies, if any, to whom we may license our AVERSION Technology or IMPEDE Technology, to obtain necessary regulatory approvals and commercialize products utilizing such technologies and the market acceptance of such products, expectations regarding potential market share for our products, our ability to enter into additional license agreements for our other product candidates, the ability to avoid infringement of patents, trademarks and other proprietary rights of third parties and the ability of our patents to protect our products from generic competition, and the ability to fulfill the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's, or FDA, requirements for approving our product candidates for commercial manufacturing and distribution in the United States, including, without limitation, the adequacy of the results of the laboratory and clinical studies completed to date and the results of laboratory and clinical studies we may complete in the future to support FDA approval of our product candidates, the adequacy of the development program for our product candidates, including whether additional clinical studies will be required to support FDA approval of our product candidates, changes in regulatory requirements, adverse safety findings relating to our product candidates, whether the FDA will agree with our analysis of our clinical studies and how it may evaluate the results of these studies or whether further studies of our product candidates will be required to support FDA approval, whether or when we are able to obtain FDA approval of labeling for our product candidates for the proposed indications or for abuse deterrent features, and whether our product candidates will ultimately deter abuse in commercial settings. In some cases, you can identify forward-looking statements by terms such as "may," "will," "should," "could," "would," "expects," "plans," "anticipates," "believes," "estimates," "projects," "predicts," "potential" and similar expressions intended to identify forward-looking statements. These statements reflect our current views with respect to future events and are based on assumptions and subject to risks and uncertainties. Given these uncertainties, you should not place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements. We discuss many of these risks in greater detail in our filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

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