



For immediate release

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### **NEI Awards Ocular Iontophoresis Research Grant To Aciont® Collaborators**

Salt Lake City, UT – The National Eye Institute (NEI) awarded a \$1.2 million research grant to the University of Cincinnati and the University of Utah to study ocular iontophoretic drug delivery and an innovative, noninvasive ocular pharmacokinetics research methodology. The grant has several research objectives including the evaluation of how transscleral iontophoresis—through varied electrical current settings, ocular device configurations and pharmaceutical formulations—influences the transport of drugs within the eye.

The main investigator of the grant is S. Kevin Li, Ph.D., of the University of Cincinnati. Other grant investigators from separate research departments from the University of Utah include Paul S. Bernstein, M.D., Ph.D., William I. Higuchi, Ph.D. and Eun-Kee Jeong, Ph.D.. Drs. Bernstein, Higuchi and Li have been collaborators of Aciont Inc. in ocular drug delivery since 2002. Higuchi and Li also are co-inventors of numerous drug delivery patents pending and issued to Aciont Inc.

“To deliver a drug to its target site at the back of the eye effectively poses a challenge to both ophthalmic scientists and medical professionals,” said Dr. Li. The grant investigators believe that the successful development of an effective, noninvasive and patient-friendly drug delivery system to deliver drugs to the posterior segment of the eye would improve significantly the outcome of treatments for posterior eye diseases such as uveitis, macular edema, age-related macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy.

“This research is a stepping stone for advancing the field of ocular iontophoresis; knowledge from basic academic research such as this should help reinforce the novelty of our Visulex® technology platform,” said John Higuchi, President of Aciont. Such a system, Aciont believes, potentially may benefit millions of people suffering from these eye conditions and reduce the high healthcare costs associated with these diseases. “The understanding of ocular pharmacokinetics and the transport barriers of the eye would be a major step toward achieving our respective goals,” Dr. Li added.

#### About Aciont

Aciont Inc. endeavors to become the world leader in commercializing localized, non-invasive and controlled release back of the eye therapeutics for sight threatening diseases. Our name Aciont (“active ion transport”) refers to our expertise in iontophoresis, a method for transporting ionized agents through tissue by applying a mild electrical current. Iontophoresis is the basis for our Visulex transcleral ocular drug delivery system, which endeavors to provide ophthalmologists substantially greater freedom in treating and/or preventing chronic eye diseases through optimal drug dosing and improved patient/physician compliance. Aciont is located in Salt Lake City, Utah. For more information, visit the company's website at [www.aciont.com](http://www.aciont.com).

Source: Aciont Inc.

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