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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****AKEBIA APPOINTS VICTOR DZAU, M.D. TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS****- Dr. Dzau is Pioneer in New Approaches to Vascular Disease -**

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**Cincinnati, OH August 31, 2009** – Akebia Therapeutics, Inc., a small molecule discovery and development company focused on anemia and vascular disorders, today announced that Victor Dzau, M.D. has been appointed to the company's Board of Directors. Dr. Dzau is the chancellor for health affairs at Duke University and president and CEO of the Duke University Health System. He is also James B. Duke Professor of Medicine and director of molecular and genomic vascular biology at Duke. Dr. Dzau's appointment brings the number of Akebia's director members to six.

"I am very pleased to have Dr. Dzau join our Board of Directors," said Joseph Gardner, Ph.D., president and chief executive officer of Akebia. "Dr. Dzau is one of the country's leading experts on health care and his extensive knowledge and thoughtful approach will be invaluable to the company. We look forward to his input on our lead program, our oral, small molecule HIF-PH inhibitor for anemia. Also, his expertise in vascular disease will be tremendously helpful as we advance our HTPPβ inhibitor / Angiopoietin 2 modulator program."

Dr. Dzau pioneered gene therapy for vascular disease, being the first to introduce DNA decoy molecules to block transcriptions as gene therapy in vivo. His laboratory has studied the molecular and genetic mechanisms of cardiovascular disease and applied genomic and gene transfer technologies to develop novel therapeutic approaches. His work on the renin angiotensin system (RAS) paved the way for the contemporary understanding of RAS in cardiovascular disease and the development of RAS inhibitors (e.g. ACE inhibitor) as therapeutics.

"I am looking forward to working with the Akebia team," said Victor Dzau, M.D. "There is an urgent need for new approaches to vascular disease and Akebia's HTPPβ inhibitor / Angiopoietin 2 modulator program is particularly exciting. The program contains potent small molecules that overcome Angiopoietin 2 mediated vascular leak which has great potential in a variety of disease areas including sepsis, critical limb ischemia and influenza."

Dr. Dzau received his M.D. from McGill University in Montreal and underwent postgraduate training at Harvard Medical School. Before joining Duke, Dr. Dzau was the Hersey Professor of the Theory and Practice of Physic (Medicine) at Harvard Medical School, chairman of the Department of Medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital, and physician-in-chief and director of research at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston. Prior to his work at Harvard and Brigham and Women's, he served as Arthur Bloomfield Professor and chairman of the Department of Medicine at Stanford.

Dr. Dzau is the recipient of many awards and honors. He received the first Hatter Award from the Medical Research Council of South Africa in 2000. He was awarded the prestigious Gustav Nylin Medal by the Swedish Royal College of Medicine and the Swedish Cardiology Society, the Novartis Award for Hypertension Research by the American Heart Association (which also named him one of its Distinguished Scientists for 2004), the 2004 Max Delbruck Medal by the Max Delbruck Center for Molecular Medicine, Berlin, Germany, the 2005 Golden Door Award by the International Institute of Boston, a 2005 Ellis Island Medal of Honor by the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations, and the 2006 Robert H. Williams, M.D., Award by the Association of Professors of Medicine.

Dr. Dzau has served on numerous committees and advisory boards, including, previously, the Executive Committee of The Academy at Harvard Medical School (of which he is a founding member) and the boards of Stanford Health System, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Partners Healthcare, and the Harvard Clinical Research Institute. Currently, he serves as a member of the Board of Directors for Duke University Health System and Genzyme Corporation. He has been elected to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences (USA) and the European Academy of Sciences and Arts. Previous chairman of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Cardiovascular Disease Advisory Committee, he served on the Advisory Committee to the Director of the NIH.

#### **About Akebia Therapeutics**

Akebia Therapeutics is a discovery and development company focused on anemia and vascular disorders. Akebia's lead program, AKB-6548, an orally bioavailable HIF- prolyl hydroxylase (HIF-PH) inhibitor for patients with anemia, is scheduled to start phase 1 clinical trials in late 2009. The market for chronic anemia drugs, which generates over \$10 billion in worldwide sales, is dominated by injectable forms of the recombinant protein growth factor EPO. There are currently no orally dosed small molecule drugs for chronic anemia. AKB-6548 potentially promises to be a safer, less expensive, orally dosed pharmaceutical to stimulate endogenous EPO production. Additionally, Akebia has a novel HPTP $\beta$  inhibitor / Angiopoietin 2 modulator, AKB-9778, for the treatment of vascular leak syndrome and critical limb ischemia which is scheduled to commence phase 1 clinical trials in mid-2010.

Website: [www.akebia.com](http://www.akebia.com).

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