



# Oregon

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**Press Release**

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**For Immediate Release**

## **Chiropractic Board Determines “NASA Medical Breakthrough” Advertising Claims Are Deceptive & Misleading;**

### **Other “Medical Breakthrough” and Related Claims To Be Examined**

At their February 8, 2007 meeting, the Oregon Board of Chiropractic Examiners (OBCE) determined that “NASA Medical Breakthrough” advertising claims promoting use of spinal decompression/traction devices are deceptive and misleading. A typical claim is that an *“Accidental Discovery by NASA in Outer Space Quickly and Easily Solves 86% of Back Pain... Astronauts that left with back pain would come back without it. So NASA did what they are good at...they investigated this new phenomenon.”* Another version says, *“NASA found during the anti-gravity state of the space travel mission, astronauts were relieved of back pain. NASA found disc height was increased during a space mission. Scientists started looking at “decompression” as a way to help chronic back pain sufferers and the results were overwhelmingly positive in many patients.”*

In November the OBCE issued a request for information to advertisers to provide supporting information, including to Axiom Worldwide Inc. in Tampa Florida, vendor of the DRX 9000 traction device. Neither Axiom nor anyone else has come forward to refute other information which says, “Back Pain is one of the most frequently occurring medical problems during space flight. It has been reported by 68% of astronauts.”<sup>1</sup>

The OBCE has also decided to review other advertising statements which the Board believes are likely misleading. These include any advertising that spinal decompression/traction devices are a “medical breakthrough,” claims of superiority such as “Non-surgical spinal decompression is the most promising disc pain treatment today,” and statements contrasting spinal decompression favorably with drugs or surgery without mentioning other kinds of chiropractic treatment. Chiropractic physicians with these advertisements will be asked to provide supporting evidence by the Board’s March 15, 2007 meeting.

Oregon law states chiropractors may not “use any advertising making untruthful, improper, misleading or deceptive statements.” (ORS 684.100 (1)(j)) The OBCE’s policy is that advertising statements must be supported by credible evidence which must be available for review upon request. Chiropractors must also identify clearly their profession in all their advertising as “chiropractor,” “chiropractic physician;” or “chiropractic” in the clinic name.

Jeffrey Tunick DC, Lordex Spine Institute of Portland, who uses the Lordex Decompression device addressed the Board and said “The end result (of this form of traction) is decompression of compressive lesions in the spine, and it does it in a way that traditional traction does not. All decompression devices are capable. It’s unfair to the public to say any one machine is the only true device. This NASA thing has become a marketing tool that has misled the practitioner and patients.” According to OBCE President Minga Guerrero DC, “The OBCE has not taken a formal position on spinal decompression treatments but does recognize there are potential benefits with this form of traction that need further investigation.”

The OBCE also supported a proposal by Dr. Tunick to form an organization of chiropractic physicians and others who utilize spinal decompression/traction to address advertising and marketing issues.

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1. “Depression, Mood State, and Back Pain During Microgravity Simulated by Bed Rest,” Styf, Hutchinson et al, Psychosomatic Medicine 63:862-864 (2001)

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For more information, contact OBCE Dave McTeague, Executive Director