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# Lincoln College Endowed Chair in Chiropractic & Biomechanical Research Annual Update 2012

By John Mayer, D.C., Ph. D., Lincoln College Endowed Chair, University of South Florida

The research program of the Lincoln College Endowed Chair in Chiropractic and Biomechanical Research at the University of South Florida (USF) is now in its fifth year. As mentioned in previous annual updates, we are fortunate that this chiropractic research program is housed within USF. USF is a Carnegie Tier 1 "very high research activity" university and is currently ranked in the top 50 US research universities in terms of research funding, according to the National Science Foundation. The Lincoln Chair's research program at USF remains the only endowed chiropractic research program at a College of

Medicine within the US. This interprofessional setting gives the chiropractic profession a unique opportunity to advance chiropractic research in ways that may not be possible at other institutions. Some of the highlights of the Lincoln Chair's program over the past year are described below.

## Research Grants

The Lincoln Chair's research program continues to expand its focus on spinal pain disorders, disability, and injury prevention. Two signature projects include:

► **Low Back Injury Prevention in**

**Firefighters.** Data collection has been completed with firefighters at Tampa Fire Rescue for this grant funded by FEMA. Preliminary analysis indicates that a targeted worksite exercise program is effective in improving back and core muscular endurance. Assuming successful future grant funding, next phase studies include full-scale prevention trials and implementation projects in fire departments across the country.

► **Reduction of Risk for Low Back Injury in Theater of Operations.** Data collection is underway in sol-

diers at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, for this grant funded by the Department of Defense. This study assesses high intensity back and core exercises in US Army soldiers training to become combat medics. The study aims to enroll nearly 600 soldiers and, therefore, requires a strong collaboration with an interdisciplinary team of researchers at USF and the US Army Medical Center Department and School. Results are expected by the end of 2013.

### **Creation of the USF Interdisciplinary Center for Neuromusculoskeletal Research**

The USF Interdisciplinary Center for Neuromusculoskeletal Research (CNMSR) gained approval to open and received funding from the Florida Legislature in 2012. Thank you to Senator Dennis Jones and our friends in the Florida Legislature for making this possible. The CNMSR is

directed by William S. Quillen, PT, PhD and co-directed by John Mayer, DC, PhD. The CNMSR is envisioned to be a multidisciplinary and integrative platform for research and the development of evidence-based approaches for assessment, prevention, and treatment of neuromusculoskeletal disorders, for which chiropractic plays a large role.

### **Involvement in Federal Health Expert Panels**

The Lincoln Chair was selected to an expert panel for a comparative effectiveness review for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's Effective Health Care Program to study "Spinal Fusion for the Treatment of Low Back Pain Secondary to Lumbar Degenerative Disc Disease" as nominated by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. In addition, Dr. Mayer was invited to participate in the NASA Spinal Deconditioning Injury Risk Summit, which assembled a team of experts to study the effect of space-

flight on injury risk. Considering that he was the only Doctor of Chiropractic invited to participate on these panels, it is clear that the exposure and uniqueness of the USF chiropractic research program played a role in acknowledging chiropractic in this manner.

### **Teaching and Service**

Over the past year, the Lincoln Chair has assumed more prominent roles in USF teaching and service. For example, Dr. Mayer is the course director for graduate courses in health promotion/wellness, and research methods, and is an instructor for primary care clerkship on management of low back pain, which stresses a multidisciplinary approach including chiropractic care. He also has assumed leadership roles within USF, such as Coordinator of Research for the School of Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation Sciences, and serves on several campus-wide and College of Medicine committees. These activities have provided unique and

unparalleled opportunities to expand the influence of chiropractic, as well as educate other health professional about our profession.

## Professional and Community Outreach

The Lincoln Chair helped launch two new exciting chiropractic research outreach initiatives over the past year. The 2011 inaugural Lincoln Research Prize in Chiropractic and Biomechanics was awarded to Scott Haldeman, DC, MD, PhD. The Lincoln Research Prize was established as the largest financial award in chiropractic research, thanks to its sponsors—Florida Chiropractic Association, Florida Chiropractic Foundation for Education and Research, and Lincoln College Education and Research Fund. In addition, the Lincoln Chair, along with the School of Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation Sciences, co-hosted the inaugural USF Health International Distinguished Lecture Series. Dr. Haldeman gave a thought-provoking presentation titled, “Spinal Disorders, the Neglected International

Crisis: New Initiatives to Relieve the Problem.” The lecture was well-attended and the audience gained learned about chiropractic’s role within an innovative spine health care model for underserved populations around the world.

## The Future

The chiropractic research program at USF continues to grow by persistence and dedication of many individuals and organization, and by seizing a variety of research opportunities, despite the challenging times. The USF chiropractic research program has established a solid base from which it can reach new heights. Continued program expansion among the increasingly tight competition for available resources depends on support from the chiropractic profession. It is an honor to be part of the USF chiropractic research program and to serve the profession. Thank you for your support. ◀FCA