

The Lincoln Chair at University of South Florida is forging a path for chiropractic in the national multidisciplinary setting.

Dr. John Mayer Selected for HHS and NASA Expert Panels

Reprinted from the University of South Florida's "USF Health Honors and Awards" releases

John Mayer Selected to Effective Health Care Expert Panel

John Mayer, DC, PhD, the Lincoln College Endowed Chair in Biomechanical and Chiropractic Research and associate professor in the School of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Sciences, has been selected to serve as a member of an expert panel for a comparative effectiveness review as part of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's (AHRQ) Effective Health Care (EHC) Program.

The National Advisory Council for the AHRQ provides advice to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary and the director of the Agency. The Council consists of 21 members from the private sector and seven ex-officio members from other federal health agencies. Members include experts from such institutions as Dartmouth College, Duke University, Kaiser Permanente, Oregon Health & Science University, along with experts from ECRI and the HHS.



Dr. Mayer, who is the Lincoln College Endowed Chair in Biome-

chanical and Chiropractic Research at the USF Morsani College of Medicine, will help conduct the comparative effectiveness review called Spinal Fusion for the Treatment of Low Back Pain Secondary to Lumbar Degenerative Disc Disease. The review was nominated by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to help inform decision-makers about the treatment of degenerative disease of the lumbar spine, including best treatment selection for patients with different degenerative conditions and demographic characteristics.

The panel, which meets several times over the course of a year, will provide expertise and guidance for



developing and finalizing the review. The results will be published on the EHC Program website and often are also published in the Annals of Internal Medicine.

NASA Taps Into USF Spinal Injury Expert Dr. John Mayer

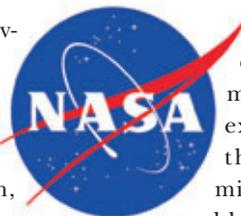
USF spine expert John Mayer, DC, PhD, will be helping NASA gain a better understanding of musculoskeletal injuries of the spine, an issue of concern for astronauts when they return to Earth.

Dr. Mayer, the Lincoln College Endowed Chair in Biomechanical and Chiropractic Research and associate professor in the School of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Sciences, was asked to join two dozen experts from within NASA and from across the country to study the full effect spaceflight has on injury risk at the Spinal Deconditioning Injury Risk Summit, to be held in June.

Because of the lack of gravity beyond Earth's atmosphere, every astronaut is subject to possible breakdown of the spine's musculoskeletal support system, called deconditioning.

"Without proper intervention, astronauts can leave in better physical shape than when they come back," said Dr. Mayer. "In unweighted environments such as those experienced by astronauts in space, the skeletal muscles, including those that support the spine, begin to atrophy and weaken in a relatively short period of time. When astronauts return, the spine is, therefore, at much greater risk for injury."

Dr. Mayer said the group, which includes experts from Harvard, Duke, and Georgia Tech, along with NASA scientists, will study what effect spaceflight deconditioning has on injury risk due to dynamic loads and landing forces, and help define possible



protection and prevention options. Potential options may include developing new exercises and/or equipment that can be used in microgravity conditions that would prevent those muscles from deteriorating to protect the spine of space crews.

"The results from our meeting and future NASA research initiatives could benefit many other groups, in addition to astronauts, since back pain and injury is one of the leading causes of disability in the general population," Dr. Mayer said. ◀FCA

Story by Sarah A. Worth, USF Health Office of Communication

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