



The Bone and Joint Decade 2000-2010 PRESS RELEASE

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“Straighten Up” Events Backbone of World Spine Day

16 October 2006 | LUND (SWEDEN) -- Today, on World Spine Day, which features “**Straighten Up**” as its theme, health care practitioners around the world are taking advantage of this unique spotlight on the spine to promote spinal health, posture and stabilisation in collaboration with the Bone and Joint Decade.

The International Bone and Joint Decade initiated **World Spine Day** at the start of the Decade to call attention to the grave burden of spinal disability on individuals and health care systems and to promote better spinal health habits during its annual National Action Week. This year, World Spine Day features “Straighten Up” as its theme and countries around the world are encouraged to get involved with public educational events featuring simple posture exercises, spine-protective bending, lifting techniques, and so on. The exercises are based on an International program which was developed by the chiropractic profession in conjunction with researchers, fitness experts and officials from the World Health Organisation. The movements are aimed at preventing spinal dysfunction through strengthening of the ‘core’ back muscles – the deep muscles that stabilise the spine during movement. Examples of events include:

Straighten up America

Straighten Up America was set up to celebrate World Spine Day in collaboration with the United States Bone and Joint Decade. Doctors of chiropractic will be teaching patients, school children, civic organisations, corporations and others simple enjoyable exercises to improve their spinal health. There will also be a national kick-off event in Washington DC. Please see http://www.life.edu/Chiropractic_and_Wellness/pdf/IntroductionSU.pdf , <http://www.chiroweb.com/archives/24/16/10.html> and <http://www.usbjd.org> for more information.

Straighten Up South Africa

On World Spine day, Straighten Up South Africa, a community service initiative aimed at improving spinal health and wellbeing, will be launched. The campaign encourages every South African family to adopt a simple three-minute exercise program as part of their daily personal routine. Please see <http://www.chiropractic.co.za/index.html?lf=1;pg=21;ai=171> for more information.

Straighten Up Australia

In Australia an estimated 16.5m people will suffer significant spinal discomfort or disability at some stage in their lifetime, and this number is steadily rising according to the Chiropractors’ Association of Australia. Prompted by these figures, the CAA launched the Straighten Up Programme across the country and offers specialised spinal fitness programmes, downloadable via its dedicated website <http://www.straightenupaustralia.com.au>

October 12th - 20th marks the sixth annual Bone and Joint Decade Action Week, dedicating specific days to major conditions affecting the musculoskeletal system, with activities planned in countries around the world aimed at highlighting the severe impact of these disorders on millions of children, adults and elderly people worldwide. Action Week runs every year from October 12th through 20th. Focus days include:

October 12 - World Arthritis Day

October 16 - World Spine Day

October 17 - World Trauma Day

October 20 - World Osteoporosis Day

Prof Lars Lidgren, Chairman of the Bone and Joint Decade, and Head of the Department of Orthopaedics at the University of Lund, said: "Musculoskeletal disorders are the leading cause of disability around the world, affecting one out of every four adults and accounting for 25% of the total cost of illness." The Decade aims to build awareness of the burden of musculoskeletal conditions by educating the public and driving research and legislation to improve care.

Some facts:

- Several hundred million people worldwide already suffer from joint diseases such as osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, and this figure is set to increase exponentially due to the predicted doubling of the number of people over age 50 by the year 2020.
- One in every three women over age 50 will suffer a fracture caused by osteoporosis.
- Up to 80% of people will suffer from back pain during their lives.
- Back pain is the second leading cause of work-place sick leave.
- Every 30 seconds someone dies in a road traffic accident, and in the same time frame three others are severely injured.
- Road traffic accidents are the leading cause of death and disability for people under age 45.

Launched in January 2000, the Bone and Joint Decade is an NGO, headquartered in Sweden, comprised of National Action Networks in 60 countries and with the support of more than 750 related organisations globally. Its mission is to advance understanding of musculoskeletal disorders worldwide through research and to improve the quality of life for those affected. The Bone and Joint Decade is supported by professional medical societies, patient advocacy groups, governments, industry and researchers who are united with the goal of advancing knowledge in the field and bringing about policy change. The Bone and Joint Decade is delighted to have the personal and active support of Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General, the World Health Organization and the World Bank.

The Bone and Joint Decade encompasses diseases associated with musculoskeletal disorders such as joint diseases, osteoporosis, osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, low back pain, spinal disorders, severe trauma to the extremities, crippling diseases and deformities in children. For more information, see www.bjdonline.org.

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