

## Team U.S.A.'s Official Chiropractor

Columbus, Ohio chiropractor Robin Hunter has practiced for 17 years. With 60-70 percent of her patients being "sports-active," she has, for the past 12 years, sought to become a member of the Olympic health care team.

"I had to be in practice for 10 years to qualify for application," she explained. Robin had to obtain a sports diplomate, go through the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) sports medicine internship program, and volunteer her services at various sporting venues, including the 2001 World Universal Games in Beijing, China as part of a 12-member team.

Her tenacity paid off this year, being appointed the official and sole DC on the United States sports medicine team for the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City. She is the first DC appointed to a U.S. Winter Olympics team, which consisted of 14 MDs, 12 trainers, and a massage therapist. "We worked elbow-to-elbow in a clinic in the Olympic village, with people in and out all day, and it was fantastic!"

Dr. Hunter was exuberant to bring chiropractic to the Olympic athletes. "The fundamental principles of our profession apply so well to athletics," she noted. "Correcting biomechanical faults and misalignments, and treating injuries with hands-on work - so that the athletes can return to play faster and better - is what sports chiropractic care is all about."

Though MDs and athletic trainers were paired and assigned to specific sports, Robin had an "all sports" designation, enabling her to work on any of the 230 athletes in the U.S. delegation, 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. daily, and "sometimes past midnight and during emergencies at all hours." Part of her 16-hour workdays was spent with patients competing in the bobsleigh; combined moguls; figure skating; freestyle aericals; skeleton; and speedskating teams, and their staff members.

"Bobsledders easily travel at speeds of between 80 and 90 miles per hour, and the whiplash and compressive forces they encounter are extraordinary!" Dr. Hunter exclaimed. "It's normal for us to see several cases of tendonitis from overuse, and standard aches and pains related to strain, but the 'higher-risk' sports commonly require treatment for the high impact they have on the body. The bobsled is like a sardine can exposed to a tremendous amount of G-force!"

Dr. Hunter also had the privilege of treating fellow chiropractors at the Olympics: Doug Sharp, DC, a bronze medal winner as a member of the U.S. Team-2 four-man bobsled, and Dave Juehring, DC, leader of the men's and women's U.S. Olympic Bobsled Team, and director of rehabilitation and sports injury department at Palmer's main clinic.

"I would never have imagined myself, a chiropractor, treating other chiropractors in the Olympics after they competed," Robin exclaimed. "I even had Dave (Juehring) do some work on me." (See [www.chiroweb.com/archives/20/06/03.html](http://www.chiroweb.com/archives/20/06/03.html) for details on the bobsledders, and [www.chiroweb.com/archives/20/07/17.html](http://www.chiroweb.com/archives/20/07/17.html) for news about ACA-sponsored speedskating phenomenon Derek Parra, a gold and silver medalist.)

An injury produced Robin's most memorable moment at the Games: "I was working with Jimmy Shea, skeleton gold medalist. He had some problems in his lower leg, and needed lots of myofascial

work just to start walking again." During the closing ceremonies Shea approached Dr. Hunter and gave her a big hug.

"Thanks for the help. I couldn't have done it without you!" Shea told Robin.

"Jimmy gave me a reproduction poster of the 1932 Olympics (Lake Placid) that his grandfather (Jack Shea, speedskater) medalled in. It has his grandfather's, father's and his autograph on it. That made me cry."

Robin echoed the feelings of those participating in the Winter Games: "It's truly overwhelming to represent our country and profession. I have a deep sense of pride when touring Salt Lake City and the Olympic Village with the Team USA uniform on."

*Jim Harrison,  
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