

VSRI Gains Temporary Reprieve In Alabama

Editorial Staff

On June 22, 1990, the Alabama State Board Of Chiropractic Examiners issued a notice to all chiropractors in Alabama (please see "Alabama Outlaws VSRI" in the August 1, 1990 issue). In this notice, the board stated:

"If you are currently involved with the Outreach 2000 Program (or any other form of research that may be considered uninvited communication that requires an oral response from the recipient), you should cease and desist this activity immediately."

This notice was issued after the Alabama Board made and passed a motion that denied approval of the (Vertebral Subluxation Research Institute's) Outreach 2000 Research Program. It was the board's opinion that: "This type of activity does not qualify for research insofar as the Outreach 2000 Research Program involves direct, in-person, uninvited communication which directly or implicitly requests an oral response from the recipient, and would thus be considered uninvited solicitation and in violation of board rule 190-X-5-.06."

This motion was to supersede a decision that took place when Royce Linton, D.C. was brought before the board in May 1989. At the time, the Alabama Board (much like many other state chiropractic boards during that time) was unprepared to address the problem of research being utilized for patient recruitment. Thus, Dr. Linton was not found guilty; however, he did agree not to participate in Outreach 2000 anymore.

This initial decision in 1989 created a legal precedent for the Alabama Board. This precedent is the stumbling block that has forced the Alabama Board to reverse its decision to outlaw the VSRI program.

But this issue is not over. According to Alabama Board attorney Stephen Dodd: "A committee has been appointed to draft a proposed rule dealing with the use of research for patient recruitment. This rule will be designed to protect the consuming public."

There is little doubt regarding the intentions of the Alabama Board. The question that the board faces is similar to questions that are being faced by many other state boards: how to protect the public from direct, uninvited parties' solicitation under the false guise of research.

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