

NEWS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE JULY 13, 2011

Contact:

Heather Guenther, 734-998-7555, hguenthe@umich.edu

Sierra Loar, 734-274-0088, sierra.loar@gmail.com

Wacky BackQuack™ game is helping consumers and physicians determine the best course of treatment for acute back pain

The BackQuack™ online game takes players through animated scenarios demonstrating what not to do

ANN ARBOR, MI...A new back pain game created by a University of Michigan doctor aims to teach doctors and patients how to improve management of back pain by demonstrating what not to do. BackQuack™, a humorous but real attempt to educate, is the subject of serious research into consumerism and physician management of back pain. This online video game was developed by spine experts to help consumers and clinicians determine the best course of treatment for acute back pain. The game is meant to be both fun and educational. To play BackQuack™ visit www.backquack.net.

BackQuack™ is being piloted over a six-month period in three Michigan communities—Jackson, Muskegon and Flint—as part of a cooperative effort by area hospitals, Jackson Physician Association, Hackley Physician Organization and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) to reduce overutilization of scans and surgeries.

“Almost everyone is disabled by back pain for more than a week at some point during their lifetime,” explained Andrew J. Haig, M.D., a spine specialist and inventor of the game. “They and their doctors need to be smart about their choices. Our goal is to have every person take a crack at becoming their own back expert though BackQuack.”

BackQuack™ takes back pain sufferers and their medical teams through a series of experiences to demonstrate that, in fact, a holistic approach that combines education with physical medicine and rehabilitation treatments is usually a better course of care than MRIs and CAT scans that oftentimes lead to surgery.

Based on extensive evidence-based research, BackQuack™ allows people to try their best to do their worst as doctors treating patients with back pain. The consumer game begins with some seriously useful tools for people who do have a backache, then introduces some fun approaches to diagnosis and



treatment in which the goal is to actually make the wrong choices in medical care – thus, learning how to make the right choices. Doctors are playing the game as well in a simulated setting that teaches what to do by demonstrating what *not* to do when a patient presents with back pain. Doctors also have access to a 400-page online back pain textbook through BackQuack™.

The BackQuack™ game was developed by Andrew J. Haig, M.D., president of Haig et al Consulting and professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the University of Michigan. Haig et al Consulting teaches hospitals and healthcare systems innovative ways to improve health care. Haig collaborated with the University of Michigan's 3-D Laboratory to design BackQuack™.

The BackQuack™ pilot is being funded by the Center for Healthcare Research & Transformation (CHRT), a nonprofit partnership between the University of Michigan and BCBSM with a mission to promote evidence-based care delivery, improve population health, and expand access to health care. For more information about CHRT, visit www.chrt.org.

Resources:

BackQuack™ website

www.backquack.net

BackQuack™ YouTube page

www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkRFWu55gVU

BackQuack Twitter

www.twitter.com/Back_Quack