

## **Scoliosis School Screening in the United States: What is the Current Lay of the Land?**

Charles T Mehlman, Kelly S Falcone<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>CCHMC

**INTRODUCTION:** The purpose of our study was to assess the status of scoliosis school screening programs in all 50 states in the United States of America.

**METHODS:** Significant decreases in braceable curves along with significant increases in the need for scoliosis surgery have been documented following cessation of school screening programs. The SRS, POSNA, AAOS, and AAP support scoliosis screening and these four professional societies suggest that females be screened twice at age 10 and 12 (grades 5 and 7), and boys once, at age 13 or 14 (grades 8 or 9). The governmental websites of all 50 states were systematically searched using the terms “scoliosis,” “scoliosis screening,” and “postural screening.” The perspective of these searches was that of a school nurse interested in developing or improving a scoliosis school screening program. Websites that yielded no scoliosis information were searched by at least two different researchers. Pertinent information from each website was analyzed and compared to the SRS/POSNA/AAOS/AAP standard.

**RESULTS:** Following recently repealed laws in three states (Indiana, Maryland, Washington), 18 states in the US have legislatively supported scoliosis school screening, and an additional 4 states have strong website support for schools who wish to screen voluntarily. Only one state in the USA (Texas) currently lists scoliosis school screening standards on their governmental website that are in compliance with the SRS/POSNA/AAOS/AAP guidelines.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:** A major reason for discontinuation of scoliosis school screening programs was insufficient evidence of an effective early intervention (i.e., bracing). The BraIST study also has established that we have an efficacious early intervention (bracing) for identified patients. Following the publication of the BraIST study, it is time for renewed discussion of such screening programs.