## In the Matter of Daniel Chapter One and James Feijo Docket No. 9329

#### **OPINION OF THE COMMISSION**

By ROSCH, Commissioner, For A Unanimous Commission:

Upon consideration of the record and the arguments of counsel, the Commission denies the Respondents' appeal and affirms the Initial Decision of the Administrative Law Judge both as a matter of fact and as a matter of law. The Commission finds the order entered below to be proper, but modifies the language in Attachment A of the Order, the prescribed notice that the Respondents are required to send to consumers who purchased the products at issue.

## I. Background and Proceedings Below

The Commission issued the Complaint in this matter on September 16, 2008 against Daniel Chapter One ("DCO") and James Feijo (collectively, "Respondents"). The Complaint alleged that Respondents engaged in deceptive acts or practices, in or affecting commerce, in violation of Sections 5(a) and 12 of the Federal Trade Commission Act ("FTC Act"), 15 U.S.C. §§ 45(a) and 52. Compl. ¶ 17.

The Complaint alleged that these deceptive acts or practices occurred in connection with the Respondents' advertising, promotion, offering for sale and distribution of four DCO products: BioShark, 7 Herb Formula, GDU and BioMixx (collectively, "the Challenged Products"), which purport to prevent, treat, or cure cancer or tumors and other serious medical illnesses. *Id.* ¶¶ 3-13.

More specifically, the Complaint alleged that advertisements for the Challenged Products represented, expressly or by implication, that:

- BioShark inhibits tumor growth and is effective in the treatment of cancer;
- 7 Herb Formula inhibits tumor growth and is effective in the treatment or cure of cancer;
- GDU eliminates tumors and is effective in the treatment of cancer; and
- BioMixx heals the destructive effects of radiation and chemotherapy and is effective in the treatment of cancer.

*Id.* ¶ 14. The Complaint alleged that those representations were deceptive in that Respondents represented, directly or by implication, that they possessed and relied upon a reasonable basis that substantiated the representations when in fact Respondents lacked a reasonable basis to substantiate them. *Id.* ¶¶ 15-17.

Respondents filed their Answer on October 11, 2008. The Answer admitted that Respondents made the representations alleged in the Complaint about the efficacy of the Challenged Products. Answer ¶ 14. The Answer also admitted that Respondents operated a website that provided information respecting the Challenged Products in a religious and educational context, but otherwise denied the allegations that they engaged in deceptive acts or practices in connection with the advertising or sale of the Challenged Products. *Id.* ¶¶ 5, 7, 9, 11, 13-15. The Answer affirmatively averred that Respondents possessed and relied upon a reasonable basis that substantiated the representations made about the Challenged Products at the time the representations were made. *Id.* ¶ 16.

Respondents filed two motions to amend their Answer. Chief Administrative Law Judge D. Michael Chappell ("ALJ"), who presided over all pretrial proceedings and the trial, denied those motions on the grounds, *inter alia*, that the proposed amendments, coming after the close of discovery and approximately two months before trial, would have been unduly prejudicial to Complaint Counsel. Respondents also filed two motions to dismiss, and cross-motions for summary judgment were filed by Respondents and Complaint Counsel. Those motions were denied.

An evidentiary hearing on jurisdiction was held on April 21, 2009. Thereafter, the ALJ issued a ruling that Complaint Counsel had demonstrated, by a preponderance of evidence, that jurisdiction existed in the case. Respondents' motion for an interlocutory appeal from that ruling was denied.

The final pre-trial conference was held on April 22, 2009, with trial commencing immediately thereafter. Following trial, Respondents and Complaint Counsel filed concurrent post-trial briefs, proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law, and replies to each other's post trial briefs and proposed findings. Closing argument was held on July 9, 2009. The ALJ issued his Initial Decision and Proposed Order on August 5, 2009.

As set forth in the Initial Decision, the ALJ found that the record showed that DCO, described by the Respondents as a house ministry, was led by Respondent James Feijo, with his wife Patricia Feijo, and that DCO engaged in business for profit for itself or for its member, James Feijo. The ALJ found that, although DCO's activities included spiritual counseling to individuals, they also included advertising and selling the dietary supplements BioShark, 7 Herb Formula, GDU and BioMixx to the public.

The ALJ also found that Respondents disseminated advertisements for the purpose of inducing, and which did induce, the purchase of a food or drug, in or having an effect on commerce within the meaning of Sections 5(a) and 12 of the FTC Act, and that those advertisements claimed that the Challenged Products, individually or collectively, prevent, treat, or cure cancer, inhibit tumors, or ameliorate the adverse effects of radiation and chemotherapy. The ALJ also found that Respondents did not have a reasonable basis to substantiate these claims and that the claims made were material to consumers.

The ALJ held that Complaint Counsel had carried its burden of proving that Respondents

are liable under Sections 5(a) and 12 of the FTC Act. The ALJ considered the defenses raised by the Respondents and concluded that they were not meritorious. The ALJ imposed a cease and desist order that, *inter alia*, enjoins Respondents from making any representation, expressly or by implication, that any dietary supplement, food, drug, or other health-related product, service, or program, including but not limited to the Challenged Products, prevents, treats, cures or assists in the prevention, treatment, or cure of any type of tumor or cancer, unless the representation is true, non-misleading, and, at the time it is made, Respondents possess and rely upon competent and reliable scientific evidence that substantiates the representation.

The order also enjoins the Respondents from making any representation about the efficacy, performance, or health-related benefits of any dietary supplement, food, drug, or other health-related product, service, or program, including but not limited to the Challenged Products, unless the representation is true, non-misleading, and, at the time it is made, Respondents possess and rely upon competent and reliable scientific evidence that substantiates the representation.

The order also requires the Respondents to send a prescribed notice to all consumers who purchased the Challenged Products that informs those consumers that the FTC has found that the advertising claims at issue were false and unsubstantiated, that the FTC has issued an order prohibiting those claims from being made in the future, and that informs those consumers about the scientific evidence on the Challenged Products.

Respondents filed a timely appeal and Complaint Counsel did not cross-appeal. The decision of the ALJ is subject to *de novo* review by the Commission. *See* 16 C.F.R. § 3.54. Accordingly, the Commission on appeal may consider the entire record and determine whether there is a sufficient evidentiary basis for the ALJ's findings of fact.

The Commission has reviewed the ALJ's findings of fact, as well as the record underlying them. The Commission has also reviewed the advertisements at issue to determine the overall net impressions conveyed by them. The Commission sees no reason to disturb the ALJ's findings of fact and adopts them as the Commission's own insofar as they are consistent with those set forth in this Opinion. Otherwise, the findings of fact in this Opinion are those of the Commission.

# II. Respondents' Claims on Appeal

Respondents make three fundamental claims in their appeal: (1) Respondents claim that the FTC did not have jurisdiction over them (RAB at 11, 29-40);<sup>1</sup> (2) Respondents claim that the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> References to the record are abbreviated as follows:

IDF Initial Decision Finding

ID Initial Decision

RAB Respondents' Appellate Brief

CAB Complaint Counsel's Answering Brief

ALJ misinterpreted various statutes, including, among others, Section 5 of the FTC Act, as well as the Due Process Clause and the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, by banning truthful statements about dietary supplements, improperly shifting the burden of proof to Respondents, applying an incorrect standard of proof, and permitting "evidence by presumption" (RAB at 11-29, 40-55); and (3) Respondents argue that the ALJ's remedy not only prohibits truthful speech, but also illegally compels Respondents to engage in government-mandated speech. RAB at 12, 55-65.

The Commission considers the Respondents' arguments in Part III in the following order: Section A considers the Respondents' jurisdictional argument; Sections B through E consider Respondents' statutory and constitutional arguments; and Section F considers the Respondents' argument concerning the remedy.

# III. Analysis

#### A. The FTC Has Jurisdiction.

## Findings of Fact.

Prior to 2002, DCO was a for-profit corporation organized in 1990 under the laws of Rhode Island. IDF 22. Its Articles of Incorporation stated that its purposes were "to engage in the sale, retail, wholesale and distribution of health products, including but not limited to health foods and supplements, namely those with special nutritive qualities and values." IDF 23. Subsequent annual reports, which were signed by Respondent James Feijo, described the character of the business in substantially the same way. IDF 24, 25. James Feijo sold BioShark, 7 Herb Formula, GDU and BioMixx while DCO was registered as a for-profit corporation. IDF 27.

DCO is currently a "corporation sole" organized in 2002 under the laws of the State of Washington. IDF 1; RAB at 30, 32. DCO's Articles of Incorporation do not specifically declare that DCO was organized exclusively for charitable or other clearly nonprofit purposes. IDF 30. The Articles do not provide for distribution of its assets upon dissolution solely to other nonprofit entities or prohibit distribution of its earnings to the benefit of any individual or forprofit corporation. *Id.* Nor do its advertising or promotional materials specifically refer to DCO as a nonprofit entity. IDF 32.

Respondent James Feijo is the sole "overseer" and trustee of DCO's assets and all of its funds, and he is DCO's sole "member." IDF 5, 6; RRB at 8. As such, he is responsible for all of

RRB Respondents' Reply Brief

Tr. Transcript of Trial Testimony

CX Complaint Counsel's Exhibit

RX Respondents' Exhibit

its activities and for directing all of its funds. IDF 5, 6. James Feijo and his wife, Patricia, are the only officers of DCO. IDF 7.

DCO has a number of bank accounts, including accounts that are described as "Business Partner" accounts. IDF 42. DCO's revenue is deposited into the Business Partners Checking accounts, and from there the revenue is distributed at James Feijo's discretion to other DCO bank accounts. IDF 42. Patricia Feijo is a signatory to DCO's bank accounts and writes checks from the DCO accounts. IDF 48. The Business Partners Money Market Fund showed a balance during the period from December 19, 2006 to February 20, 2008 in excess of \$1 million, but on February 21, 2008, a debit of over \$800,000 was posted. IDF 45.

DCO or its affiliate own the Rhode Island and Florida homes in which James and Patricia Feijo live, as well as two Cadillacs that James Feijo uses. ID at 75; IDF 55-57. DCO paid for all of the Feijos' living expenses, including pool and gardening expenses, tennis and golf club expenses, as well as the Feijos' expenditures on retail items and at restaurants. IDF 58, 61-70.

DCO currently sells 150 to 200 products, including BioShark, 7 Herb Formula, GDU and BioMixx. IDF 8. James Feijo has been solely responsible for the development, creation, production, and pricing of the Challenged Products. IDF 37. James and Patricia Feijo have been solely responsible for creating, drafting and approving directions for the usage, and developing recommended dosages, for the Challenged Products. IDF 38, 39.

Sales of the 150 to 200 products sold by DCO, all of which are dietary supplements, have generated approximately \$2 million in annual gross sales. IDF 9, 10. DCO's sales of BioShark, 7 Herb Formula, GDU and BioMixx constituted 20 to 30 percent of DCO's sales during the period from 2006 through 2008. IDF 80. The acquisition costs for those products is about 30 percent of the sale price. IDF 83.

Over a thousand people have purchased the Challenged Products, including people who do not belong to any DCO religious community and people who do not believe in God. IDF 81, 82. Respondents sell the four Challenged Products through publications, a call center, a radio program, over the Internet, and through stores and other resellers. IDF 84, 158. Any consumer could be directed to the DCO website by entering the term "cancer" in a Google internet search. IDF 162.

DCO's publications are fourfold. The first is entitled "Bioguide: The BioMolecular Nutrition Guide to Natural Health" ("BioGuide"), which was prepared by James Feijo, describes "two aspects of BioMolecular Nutrition, the spiritual and the physical" and promotes all four Challenged Products. IDF 203-211, 228, 229, 249, 270-274, 287-290. The second publication is the BioMolecular Nutrition Product Catalog ("Product Catalog"), which describes all of DCO's products including the four Challenged Products, but does not mention the existence of a DCO ministry. IDF 91, 233, 234, 256, 257, 279, 280. The third publication is a newsletter entitled "How to Fight Cancer is <u>Your</u> Choice!!!" ("Newsletter"), which promotes all four of the Challenged Products. IDF 94-96, 194-201, 231, 251, 253, 254, 276, 277, 292, 293. The fourth publication is entitled "The Most Simple Guide to the Most Difficult Diseases: The Doctors'

How-To Quick Reference Guide" ("Most Simple Guide"). It also promotes the four Challenged Products. IDF 192. The Most Simple Guide, the BioGuide, and the Newsletter are all available to anyone by download from DCO's website. IDF 163, 169, 172.

Each of these publications promotes DCO's call center and the toll-free number to access it, as well as DCO's principal website address. IDF 90, 91, 94, 167, 174. The Newsletter promotes the BioGuide and the Most Simple Guide. IDF 168, 175. All except the Product Catalog promote the radio program. IDF 177.

As previously mentioned, DCO has a toll-free number and a call center for consumers to buy their products. IDF 99. They were created, managed and maintained by James Feijo, who has supervised the call center and taken consumer orders. IDF 100, 101. DCO also has several websites at which it takes consumers' orders, the principal one of which invites consumers to shop at DCO's "On-Line Store" and to "Buy Now." IDF 103-107. These websites promote all four of the Challenged Products. IDF 179-190, 220-226, 237-244, 246, 247, 262-268, 283-286.

DCO also has a radio program, which is co-hosted by James and Patricia Feijo for two hours a day. IDF 108, 109. On that program, the Feijos have promoted the Challenged Products. IDF 213-217, 260, 261. They have also counseled individuals who have identified themselves as cancer patients, and they (and the website) have provided listeners with the toll-free number they can use to buy DCO's products. IDF 102, 110, 111.

A number of retail stores and chiropractic centers in various states sell DCO products. IDF 116-119. Respondents have prepared a brochure entitled "The Truth Will Set You Free" for retailers of DCO products. Among the benefits listed in that brochure are financial rewards, and the brochure makes the representation that DCO is "the ONLY nutrition company where the owners personally tell thousands of people to visit your office or store." IDF 122. Respondents also promote an "affiliate program" on their principal web page where they offer website owners "a means of profiting from their websites" by "generat[ing] sales for commercial websites" in order to "earn a commission." IDF 123.

To promote its products, DCO offers consumers coupons for their next online order, and discounts when products are purchased in volume. IDF 113-115. Moreover, in addition to the revenue derived from sale of its products, DCO charges shipping and handling fees totaling \$20.95. IDF 112.

#### Legal Analysis.

On appeal, Respondents argue that the ALJ was mistaken and incorrect in concluding that the FTC had jurisdiction over DCO. In support of this contention, Respondents rely on several alleged Due Process errors and misapplications of law by the ALJ. RAB at 31. Specifically, Respondents argue that the ALJ misapplied the applicable law regarding jurisdiction; disregarded DCO's status as a corporation sole, a legitimate entity outside the FTC's jurisdiction; failed to require Complaint Counsel to prove that DCO is a corporation "organized to carry on business for its own profit or that of its members;" and failed

to prove that DCO or its members "derived a profit from DCO's activities." RAB 31-40. These arguments are each considered below.

As Respondents acknowledge in their appellate briefs, California Dental Ass'n v. FTC, 526 U.S. 756 (1999) and Community Blood Bank v. FTC, 405 F.2d 1011 (8th Cir. 1969), are controlling authorities respecting their challenge to the FTC's jurisdiction. RAB at 31, 34; RRB at 17. Both cases, following the language of § 4 of the FTC Act, hold that the Commission's jurisdiction extends to a corporation organized to carry on business for its own profit or that of its members. See California Dental, 526 U.S. at 766-67 ("The FTC Act is at pains to include not only an entity 'organized to carry on business for its own profit,'... but also one that carries on business for the profit 'of its members'"); Community Blood Bank, 405 F.2d at 1022 (holding the Commission has jurisdiction over nonprofit corporations without shares of capital, which engage in business for their own profit or that of their members); see also 15 U.S.C. § 44.

Respondents try to distinguish these cases from the instant case by parsing the definition of "profit" and by arguing that, contrary to the teaching of *California Dental*, DCO did not make a profit and has no for-profit subsidiaries. RAB at 32. Specifically, Respondents quote *California Dental* for the proposition that "according to a generally accepted definition 'profit' means gain from business or investment over and above expenditures, or gain made on business or investment where both receipts or payments are taken into account." RAB at 32 (*quoting California Dental*, 526 U.S. at 768 n.6 (*citing Community Blood Bank*, 405 F.2d at 1017)). However, the ALJ cited to the same *California Dental* language in evaluating the evidence and reaching his conclusion that by engaging in commercial activities, DCO operates a commercial enterprise and thereby is not a business organized or engaged in only charitable purposes. ID at 70-71. In addition, Respondents failed to include the conclusion of the quoted sentence where the Court noted that "the 'term's meaning must be derived from the context in which it is used." *California Dental*, 526 U.S. at 768 n.6 (*citing Community Blood Bank*, 405 F.2d at 1016).

Respondents contend that they are a religious ministry organized and operated for charitable purposes. RAB at 2, 31. Respondents argue that by acknowledging that DCO was a religious ministry, but still concluding that the FTC had jurisdiction over DCO, the ALJ's conclusions are "unprecedented, legally incorrect and unsupported by the facts." RAB at 4, 29-30. But Community Blood Bank specifically holds that such a finding does not foreclose the FTC from exercising jurisdiction over a respondent. 405 F.2d at 1017-18; see also id. at 1018 ("Congress took pains in drafting § 4 to authorize the Commission to regulate so-called nonprofit corporations, associations and all other entities if they are in fact profit-making enterprises."). Nonprofit status insulates an entity from FTC jurisdiction when the entity is engaged in business for "only charitable purposes." Id. at 1022. Whatever else may be said about DCO's religious status and activities, the findings of fact, supported by extensive evidence, establish that DCO conducted business for the purpose and with the effect of selling its products, including the four Challenged Products. IDF 80-84, 91, 94, 96, 98-101, 110-113, 116-119, 123, 158, 174-190, 192, 194-201, 203-211, 213-217, 220-229, 231, 233, 234, 237-244, 246, 247, 249, 253, 254, 256, 257, 260-268, 270-274, 276, 277, 279, 280, 283-290, 292, 293. Thus, the ALJ did nothing to impeach his conclusion that the FTC had jurisdiction over Respondents.

The Respondents also argue that the ALJ failed to require proof that DCO was organized and operated to carry on business for its own profit or that of its members. RAB at 30, 34-35. In support of this contention, Respondents insist that DCO was not a for-profit corporation because it did not "make a profit" and that "the evidence showed the DCO operates at a breakeven point or less." RAB at 30, 35. Whether or not that is true, it is beside the point. As the ALJ pointed out, it is not necessary to show that the entity was actually successful in running its business or turning a profit. ID at 71 (citing California Dental, 526 U.S. at 768 n.6 ("the FTC Act does not require for Commission jurisdiction that members of an entity turn a profit on their membership, but only that the entity be organized to carry on business for members' profit"); *In re Ohio Christian College*, 80 F.T.C. 815, 849-50 (1972) (stating that the fact that respondents "were apparently not very successful in their enterprise" was of "little consequence")). As discussed above, Respondents' activities, as described in the findings of fact, and supported by extensive evidence, establish that DCO conducted business for the purpose and with the effect of selling its products.

Moreover, in In re College Football Ass'n, 117 F.T.C. 971, 994 (1994), the Commission stated that Community Blood Bank thus established a two-part test looking to "the source of the entity's income, i.e., to whether the corporation is 'organized for and actually engaged in business for only charitable purposes,' and to the destination of the income, i.e., to whether either the corporation or its members derive a profit." Respondents contend that the FTC must also show the "destination" of DCO's income, and argue that the ALJ improperly shifted the burden of proof from the FTC to the Respondents to show that the income did not profit either DCO or Mr. Feijo. RAB at 35-36. However, the ALJ's findings of fact, supported by ample evidence, show that the "destination" of the profits of DCO's for-profit activities was James Feijo. ID at 74-76. As DCO's sole "member," "overseer," and "trustee," James Feijo was responsible for all of DCO's activities, including the distribution of its funds; he distributed those funds to himself and his wife for their benefit. The record also shows that DCO or its affiliate owned the Feijos' Rhode Island and Florida homes and two Cadillacs, and was the source of all of their living expenses, including their tennis, golf and restaurant expenses. IDF 5, 6, 42, 48, 55-58, 61-70. Thus, it cannot be said that the ALJ's conclusion that the FTC had jurisdiction over DCO was "unprecedented." RAB at 11; RRB at 12, 14, 21-22. To the contrary, it was fully supported by California Dental and Community Blood Bank.

Finally, it cannot be said that the ALJ was "mistaken" in exercising jurisdiction over DCO and Mr. Feijo despite the existence of various statutes and regulations that allow churches to carry on "business activities" for purposes of exemption from federal income taxation or provide "religious workers' special exemptions." RAB at 38-40. Respondents argue that DCO's status as a church and Mr. Feijo's status as a minister entitle Respondents to special tax treatment. RAB at 39. Similarly, Respondents contend that DCO was organized as a "corporation sole" in 2002 under the laws of the State of Washington, and, as such, has been a nonprofit corporation since 2002. RAB at 29-31. As recognized by the ALJ, however, "courts and the Commission look to the substance, rather than the form, of incorporation in determining jurisdiction under the FTC Act." ID at 71 (citations omitted). The Commission agrees with the ALJ's determination, supported by ample evidence in the record, that "DCO bears none of the substantive indicia of a corporation that is truly organized only for charitable purposes." *Id*.

## B. Respondents Made the Claims Alleged in the Complaint.

### Findings of Fact.

The text of the advertisements at issue here repeatedly links all four products collectively to the prevention, treatment or cure of cancer. IDF 179, 180, 183, 186, 190, 192, 195, 197, 200, 203, 204, 208, 213. Furthermore, the advertisements repeatedly link each product individually to the cure or treatment of cancer, the shrinkage of tumors, or, in the case of BioMixx, to the amelioration of the side effects of radiation and chemotherapy. IDF 182, 198, 199, 204, 206, 221, 222, 223, 225, 226, 228, 231, 233 (respecting BioShark); IDF 237-244, 246, 247, 249, 251-254, 256, 257, 260 (respecting 7 Herb Formula); IDF 262, 264-268, 270-274, 276, 277, 279, 280 (respecting GDU); IDF 283-285, 287-290, 292, 293 (respecting BioMixx). Indeed, in some of these advertisements the linkage between these products and the treatment or cure of cancer is to a specific type of cancer such as breast cancer (IDF 182, 187, 265, 267, 268, 273); brain cancer (IDF 184, 200, 249, 289); prostate cancer (IDF 187, 206 253, 265, 271, 274, 290); skin cancer (IDF 208, 214); colon cancer (IDF 217, 260); leukemia (IDF 276, 284); bladder cancer (IDF 200); renal cancer (IDF 207); and esophageal cancer (IDF 252). Generally, these links were explicit, but even when they were implicit, the linkage was clear.

The linkage in these advertisements was frequently emphasized by testimonials, generally by consumers. IDF 180, 181, 183, 184, 186, 197-200, 203-210, 231, 242-244, 247, 249, 253, 265, 267, 268, 273, 276, 284, 290, 292. Again, the linkage in the testimonials between the products and the treatment or cure of cancer, the shrinkage of tumors or, in the case of BioMixx, to the healing effects on radiation or chemotherapy was generally explicit, but even where it was implicit, the linkage was clear. That linkage was also frequently stressed either by the use of bold-faced type, the use of italics or the use of capital letters. IDF 180, 182, 186, 187, 190, 192, 204-209, 221, 226, 228, 231, 237, 238, 240-243, 249, 252-254, 266, 271, 274, 276, 283, 285, 289. Additionally, the products or consumers purporting to use them were depicted in the advertisements. IDF 180, 184, 190, 204, 206-208, 210, 221, 237, 238, 240, 241, 251 (logo), 254 (logo), 256, 262, 263, 266, 271, 276, 279, 283-285, 290.

These advertisements did not exist in isolation from each other. As previously described, DCO's publications prominently displayed the existence of DCO's call center and the toll-free number by which the call center could be accessed, as well as DCO's principal website address. IDF 90, 91, 98, 167-169, 174. Also, the Newsletter promoted the BioGuide and The Most Simple Guide, and the call center promoted the DCO email address. IDF 168, 175-177. Thus, the overall net impressions left by these advertisements were mutually reinforcing.

Those overall net impressions were that: (1) BioShark inhibits tumor growth and is effective in the prevention, treatment, or cure of cancer (IDF 224, 227, 230, 232, 235); (2) 7 Herb Formula inhibits tumor formation and is effective in the prevention, treatment, or cure of cancer (IDF 245, 248, 250, 255, 258); (3) GDU eliminates tumors and is an effective treatment for cancer (IDF 269, 275, 278, 281); and (4) BioMixx heals the adverse effects of radiation and chemotherapy and is effective in the prevention, treatment, or cure of cancer. IDF 286, 291, 294.

Respondents' advertisements and materials sometimes included "disclaimers" of these overall net impressions. DCO's websites asserted, *inter alia*, that "[t]he information provided in this site is not intended to diagnose a disease;" that the information "is designed to support, not replace, the relationship that exists between a patient site visitor and his/her health provider;" and that "this product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent disease." IDF 296, 297, 300, 301. The BioGuide and Newsletter stated, *inter alia*, that they were "not intended to diagnose or treat disease." IDF 298, 299. The Most Simple Guide contains no disclaimer language. IDF 302.

For the most part, these disclaimers were made in "mouse print" or type size significantly smaller than the type of the text contributing to those overall net impressions. IDF 296, 298-300, 303. They were often buried in copyright disclosures, and placed well after the conclusion of the advertising claims. IDF 296-300. Moreover, they disclaimed only Respondents' "intentions," not the representations themselves. They did not dispel the overall net impressions left by the advertisements and by the other contributing factors that the Challenged Products prevent, treat, or cure cancer. IDF 306.

## Legal Analysis.

Respondents do not take issue with the ALJ's conclusion that the "overall net impression" of the advertising promoting the four Challenged Products determines what impression is conveyed by an advertisement. RAB at 4, 5, 11; RRB at 38. That acknowledgment is not gratuitous. The courts have long held that to be the test applied in determining what impressions are conveyed to consumers. *See, e.g., American Home Prods. Corp. v. FTC*, 695 F.2d 681, 687 (3rd Cir. 1982); *FTC v. Sterling Drug, Inc.*, 317 F.2d 669, 674 (2d Cir. 1963); *FTC v. Bronson Partners LLC*, 564 F. Supp. 2d 119, 125 (D. Conn. 2008); *FTC v. QT, Inc.*, 448 F. Supp. 2d 908, 920-21, 929, 932 (N.D. Ill. 2006), *aff'd*, 512 F.3d 858 (7th Cir. 2008). Moreover, Respondents admitted that they made the representations that the ALJ found were conveyed by the advertisements at issue (Answer ¶ 14), although now Respondents shrug off the admissions as "ministerial error" and stress that the ALJ did not consider them. RBB at 35.

However, Respondents repeatedly assert that in assessing those "overall net impressions," the ALJ was obliged by the Due Process Clause and the First Amendment of the Constitution to consider "extrinsic" evidence. RAB at 2, 4, 13, 48-49; RRB at 12-13, 30-31. More specifically, Respondents claim that "Complaint Counsel should have been required to produce evidence that consumers were actually misled by Respondents' promotional efforts and representations," including testimony from the misled consumers themselves. RAB at 14, 23-24; RRB at 33, 34, 37-38, 57. Indeed, Respondents contend that the ALJ's failure to require Complaint Counsel to do so amounted to resorting to "presumptions" instead of evidence or at least "shifting the burden of proof" to Respondents in violation of the Due Process Clause and the First Amendment. RAB at 3, 11, 14, 24.

That is not the law. Federal courts have long held that the Commission has the common sense and expertise to determine "what claims, including implied ones, are conveyed in a

challenged advertisement, so long as those claims are reasonably clear." *Kraft, Inc. v. FTC*, 970 F.2d 311, 319 (7th Cir. 1992); *accord FTC v. Colgate-Palmolive Co.*, 380 U.S. 374, 391-92 (1965); *Thompson Med. Co. v. FTC*, 791 F.2d 189, 197 (D.C. Cir. 1986); *Bronson Partners*, 564 F. Supp. 2d at 126; *FTC v. Nat'l Urological Group, Inc.*, No. 1:04-CV-3294-CAP, 2008 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 44145, at \*41-43 (N.D. Ga. June 4, 2008) (extrinsic evidence "is only necessary when the asserted claims fall on the 'barely discernable' side of the continuum"); *QT, Inc.*, 448 F. Supp. 2d at 958.

Moreover, in *Kraft*, the Seventh Circuit rejected Respondents' First Amendment argument. Like Respondents, Kraft contended that *Peel v. Attorney Registration & Disciplinary Commission*, 496 U.S. 91 (1990), held that the First Amendment required "extrinsic" evidence and prevented the Commission from determining the overall net impression conveyed by advertisements challenged as deceptive under the FTC Act. The Court of Appeals held that the restriction challenged in *Peel* is "a completely different animal than the one challenged here." *Kraft*, 970 F.2d at 317. It explained that in *Peel*, the issue was whether a "regulation applicable to all lawyers, completely prohibiting an entire category of potentially misleading speech, passed constitutional muster" in contrast to "whether an individualized FTC cease and desist order, prohibiting a particular set of deceptive ads, passes constitutional muster." *Id*.

In this case, the ALJ and the Commission itself have determined the "overall net impressions" of the representations made about the Challenged Products, based not only on the text of the advertisements itself, but also on the interaction of other factors that operate to create that impression, such as testimonials, bold type, visual images and mutually reinforcing language. ID at 82-83. Those are factors that the Commission and the courts have recognized are probative in determining what messages advertising is conveying. *In re Kraft*, 114 F.T.C. 40, 121 (1991), *aff'd*, 970 F.2d 311 (7th Cir. 1992); *see also Bronson Partners*, 564 F. Supp. 2d at 125; *In re Telebrands Corp.*, 140 F.T.C. 278, 290 (2005), *aff'd*, 457 F.3d 354 (4th Cir. 2006). The Commission therefore does not agree with Respondents that "evidence" has been supplanted by "presumptions" or that the ALJ shifted the "burden of proof" to Respondents so as to violate Due Process or the First Amendment of the Constitution in the determination of those overall net impressions.

As discussed below, the alleged "disclaimers" do not dispel these overall net impressions.

### C. Respondents' Representations Were Deceptive Unless Properly Substantiated.

After reaching his findings on the overall net impressions of the Respondents's advertising respecting the efficacy of the four Challenged Products, the ALJ next examined whether those representations were deceptive under Commission and federal case law. He concluded that under that case law, the representations would be deceptive under Sections 5 and 12 of the FTC Act if they were either shown to be false or shown to lack a reasonable basis substantiating the claims made in the advertisement. ID at 99 (citing FTC v. Pantron I, 33 F.3d 1088, 1096 (9th Cir. 1994); In re Thompson Med. Co., 104 F.T.C. 648, 818-19 (1984), aff'd, 791 F.2d 189 (D.C. Cir. 1986)).

The ALJ focused on whether the advertisements at issue were deceptive or misleading under the "reasonable basis" theory because the Complaint only made "reasonable basis" allegations. *Id.* Again, citing Commission and federal case law, the ALJ stated that the "reasonable basis theory holds that claims about a product's attributes, performance, or efficacy ('objective' product claims) carry with them the express or implied representation that the advertiser had a reasonable basis substantiating the claims at the time the claims were made." *Id.* (*citing In re Thompson Med. Co.*, 104 F.T.C. at 813; *FTC v. Direct Mktg. Concepts*, 569 F. Supp. 2d 285, 298 (D. Mass. 2008); *In re Kroger Co.*, No. C-9102, 1978 FTC LEXIS 332, at \*15 (May 17, 1978)).

Respondents do not (and cannot) dispute that this is a correct reading of the case law. However, Respondents contend that in applying these principles, the ALJ again engaged in "presumptions" and shifted the "burden of proof" in a way that violated the Due Process Clause and the First Amendment of the Constitution. RRB at 34, 51.

First, Respondents contend that the representations made about the efficacy of the four Challenged Products cannot be challenged as deceptive, consistent with the First Amendment. Specifically, Respondents liken those representations to mere "ideas, opinions, beliefs and theories" involved in *In re Rodale Press, Inc.*, 71 F.T.C. 1184 (1967), to a ban on the words "natural," "organic" and "health food" which an FTC Presiding Officer condemned in connection with the Commission's Proposed Trade Regulation Rule on Food Advertising ("Food Rulemaking") (Report of the Presiding Officer, Proposed Trade Regulation Rule: Food Advertising, Pub. Rec. No. 215-40, at 239, Feb. 21, 1978), and with the representations about "matters of opinion" involved in *United States v. Johnson*, 221 U.S. 488 (1911). RAB at 5-11.

Respondents' representations are not matters of opinion, but, as the ALJ put it, "objective product claims . . . stated in positive terms and . . . not qualified to be statements of opinion." ID at 99. Or, to put the matter more baldly, Respondents' representations were representations of fact, not simply representations about ideas, opinions, beliefs or theories; Respondents made assertions not just about what they believed those products might do, but represented that the four Challenged Products would in fact treat or cure cancer, prevent or shrink tumors, and ameliorate the side effects of radiation and chemotherapy. *See, e.g.*, IDF 179, 180, 183,186, 190, 192, 195, 197, 200, 203, 204, 208, 213 (Challenged Products collectively); IDF 221-223, 225, 226, 228, 231, 233 (BioShark); IDF 182, 198, 199, 204, 206, 237-244, 246, 247, 249, 251-254, 256, 257, 260 (7 Herb Formula); IDF 262, 264-268, 270-274, 276, 277, 279, 280 (GDU); IDF 283-285, 287-290, 292, 293 (BioMixx). Therefore, as a matter of law, there was an implied claim that there was a reasonable basis substantiating those representations. *In re Thompson Med. Co.*, 104 F.T.C. at 813 n.37 (noting that "objective product claims carry with them an express or implied statement that the advertiser has some amount of support for the claim").

Beyond that, *Rodale Press*, the Food Rulemaking, and the *Johnson* case were not decided on constitutional grounds. As Respondents acknowledge, the Commission simply voted to dismiss *Rodale Press*. RAB at 6. Similarly, the Commission abandoned its Proposed Trade Regulation Rule on Food Advertising on the ground that case-by-case scrutiny would be more appropriate. *See* Food Advertising, 45 Fed. Reg. 23705 (Apr. 8, 1980); Termination of Proposed

Trade Regulation, 48 Fed. Reg. 23270 (May 24, 1983). In neither instance was the Commission's action compelled by the First Amendment. *See, e.g.*, 45 Fed. Reg. at 23706 (stating that "it is not clear that the claims under scrutiny are readily susceptible to the across-the-board remedies that have been proposed or that this approach represents the ideal solution for remedying deception or unfairness"); *Rodale Press, Inc. v. FTC*, 407 F.2d 1252 (D.C. Cir. 1968) (vacating Commission's order and remanding for further hearing and argument on new theory of violation); *In re Rodale Press, Inc.*, 74 F.T.C. 1429, 1430 (1968) (dismissing complaint because, "[f]urther continuation of these proceedings at this time appearing not to be in the public interest and the possibility appearing remote that the practices challenged in the complaint would be resumed in the future"). Respondents likewise acknowledge that "[t]he *Johnson* case did not reach the constitutional question because the majority disposed of it as a legislative interpretation case." RAB at 11. Indeed, as the ALJ pointed out, Congress effectively overruled *Johnson* by amending the Food and Drug Act to expressly include claims regarding curative effectiveness. ID at 111 (*citing* Act of June 30, 1906, as amended, 37 Stat. 416 (1912)).

Additionally, Respondents' representations are not protected by the First Amendment. It is well established under applicable Supreme Court precedent that commercial speech is accorded less protection than other constitutionally protected forms of speech. ID at 112 (citing Cent. Hudson Gas & Elec. Corp. v. Pub. Serv. Comm'n of N.Y., 447 U.S. 557, 562-63 (1980); Va. Pharm. Bd. v. Va. Citizens Consumer Council, Inc., 425 U.S. 748, 771-72 n.24 (1976)). In determining whether speech is commercial, Zauderer v. Office of Disciplinary Council, 471 U.S. 626, 637-38 (1985), is instructive. Zauderer holds that the determination of whether speech is commercial speech "rests heavily on 'the common sense distinction between speech proposing a commercial transaction . . . and other varieties of speech." ID at 113 (citations omitted). Thus, as the ALJ pointed out in the Initial Decision, speech that "propose[s] a commercial transaction" necessarily constitutes commercial speech. Id. (citing Bd. of Trs. of State Univ. of N.Y. v. Fox, 492 US. 469, 473-74 (1989)).

As previously discussed in connection with Respondents' jurisdictional challenge, the primary purpose and effect of Respondents' representations concerning the four Challenged Products was to sell those products. Those representations constituted commercial speech, not simply practicing religion or engaging in "charitable solicitations." See RRB at 62. As a matter of law, including religious or political views in the commercial advertising at issue does not convert Respondents' commercial speech to constitutionally protected religious or political speech. ID at 114; *see also Bolger v. Youngs Drug Prods. Corp.*, 463 U.S. 60, 67-68 (1983) (holding that mailings constituted "commercial speech notwithstanding the fact that they contain discussions of important public issues such as venereal disease and family planning"); *id.* at 68 (*quoting Central Hudson*, 447 U.S. at 563 n.5 ("[A]dvertising which 'links a product to a current public debate' is not thereby entitled to the constitutional protection afforded noncommercial speech.")).

Accordingly, the Supreme Court cases concerning *non-commercial* speech upon which Respondents rely – namely, *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan*, 376 U.S. 254 (1964); *Village of Schaumburg v. Citizens for a Better Environment*, 444 U.S. 620 (1980); and *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624 (1943) – do not apply at all. *Cf. Church of* 

Scientology v. Richardson, 437 F. 2d 214, 218 (9th Cir. 1971) (holding there was no First Amendment violation so long as the FDA "could determine the E-meter's [an instrument used in the practice of Scientology] intended use without evaluating the truth or falsity of any related 'religious' claims."). RRB at 56.

The Supreme Court's First Amendment cases involving commercial speech upon which Respondents rely — Central Hudson, 447 U.S. 557; Edenfield v. Fane, 507 U.S. 761 (1993); Greater New Orleans Broadcasting Ass'n. v. United States, 527 U.S. 173 (1999); Ibanez v. Florida Department of Business & Professional Regulation, Board of Accountancy, 512 U.S. 136 (1994); In re R.M.J., 455 U.S. 191 (1982); Peel v. Attorney Registration & Disciplinary Commission, 496 U.S. 91 (1990); Rubin v. Coors Brewery Co., 514 U.S. 476 (1995); Thompson v. Western States Medical Center, 535 U.S. 357 (2002); Virginia State Board of Pharmacy v. Virginia Citizens Consumer Council, Inc., 425 U.S. 748 (1976); and Illinois ex rel. Madigan v. Telemarketers Ass'n., 538 U.S. 600, 619-20 (2003) — have all affirmed that misleading or deceptive commercial speech is not protected by the First Amendment. Those declarations are often included in the passages cited by Respondents. RAB at 18, 20-21; RRB at 51-52.

Respondents argue that *Central Hudson*, *Peel*, *Ibanez* and *Thompson*, *Madigan* and *Greater New Orleans Broadcasting* teach that under the First Amendment, the government (here the FTC) must identify a "substantial interest" in order to justify restricting their advertising. RAB at 20-23; RRB at 51-52. Respondents further cite *Edenfield*, 507 U.S. at 770-71, for the proposition that the "substantial interest" cannot be established by mere "speculation and conjecture." RAB at 22. But that gets things backward. In *Central Hudson*, the Supreme Court set forth the four-part analysis for determining whether regulation of commercial speech is constitutional. A first and threshold inquiry is whether the speech in question is false or misleading; for commercial speech to be afforded any First Amendment protection, "it at least must concern lawful activity and not be misleading." 447 U.S. at 566. Non-misleading commercial speech remains subject to reasonable regulation, under the remaining three elements of the *Central Hudson* analysis: whether the regulation is based on a substantial governmental interest; "whether the regulation directly advances the governmental interest asserted;" and "whether it is not more extensive than necessary to serve that interest." *Id*.

The cases cited by Respondents all recognize that the latter three prongs of the test are reached if, and only if, Respondent's advertising is not misleading or deceptive. *See Edenfield*, 507 U.S. at 768 ("[O]ur cases make clear that the State may ban commercial expression that is fraudulent or deceptive without further justification."). The ALJ found Respondents' commercial speech deceptive. The record shows that the ALJ's findings were based on the text of the advertisements at issue, as well as the Respondents' use of testimonials, bold print, pictures and mutually reinforcing advertisements to create the "overall net impressions" conveyed by the advertisements. In reviewing the ALJ's findings, the Commission has also brought its expertise and experience to bear. Once reaching that finding, no further analysis is necessary.

Respondents also emphasize that *Thompson v. Western States Medical Center* held that under the First Amendment, even if the government has an interest in preventing misleading

advertisements, it could not enjoin the compounding of drugs if disclaimers would be a less restrictive alternative. RAB at 60. In their Reply Brief, Respondents argue that *Pearson v. Shalala*, 164 F.3d 650 (D.C. Cir. 1999), said the same thing about the use of disclaimers. RRB at 27-30. That case does not help Respondents either. Both in *Thompson* and in the portion of *Pearson* on which Respondents rely, the issue was not the condemnation of particular commercial speech found to have been actually misleading, but rather the regulation of broad categories of speech, subject to the latter three prongs of the *Central Hudson* analysis. *See Thompson*, 535 U.S. at 368; *Pearson*, 164 F.3d at 655-56. It was in the context of that analysis – assessing the "fit" between government regulation of non-misleading commercial speech and the interests sought to be served – that each court focused on the use of disclaimers as a substantially less restrictive alternative to outright bans. *See Central Hudson*, 535 U.S. at 376; *Pearson*, 164 F.3d at 657-58. Respondents offer no support for their assertion that the *Central Hudson* "fit" analysis should be imported into cases like the present one, in which an administrative agency is adjudicating the deceptive nature of particular advertisements.<sup>2</sup>

Even if we were to adopt Respondents' unprecedented approach to this issue, their arguments fail on the record before us. Respondents' "disclaimers" here were ineffective, given the multiple techniques Respondents used to reinforce their overall advertising messages, the comparatively small print in which most of their "disclaimers" were printed (IDF 296, 298, 299, 300, 303), their ambiguity and lack of conspicuousness (IDF 305), and the fact that even those "disclaimers" only disclaimed Respondents' "intentions," not the messages themselves. Any one of these factors would blunt the effectiveness of the disclaimers. *See, e.g., Removatron Int'l v. FTC*, 884 F.2d 1489, 1497 (1st Cir. 1989) (holding that disclaimer that was not clear and conspicuous was ineffective). Considering these factors in combination, Respondents' "disclaimers" did not dispel the overall net impressions that the four Challenged Products would treat or cure the diseases and conditions that Respondents' representations conveyed.

Second, Respondents argue that none of this First Amendment jurisprudence applies to herbal supplements like the four Challenged Products because they are not "drugs" within the meaning of the Food and Drug Act. RAB at 8. As Respondents acknowledge, the Food and Drug Act "differs from" the FTC Act. RRB at 41 (*quoting FTC v. QT, Inc.*, 512 F.3d 858, 861 (7th Cir. 2008)). Respondents do not explain why or how the Food and Drug Act can be considered binding on the Commission in enforcing the Sections 5 and 12 of the FTC Act. Under the FTC Act, these products are embraced within Section 5, and, as the ALJ observed, the FTC Act defines the words "food" and "drug" broadly for purposes of Section 12. ID at 80. Accordingly, the courts have repeatedly held that that definition covers dietary supplements. *See, e.g., FTC v. Natural Solution, Inc.*, No. CV 06-6112-JFW, 2007 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 60783, at \*11-12 (C.D. Cal. Aug. 7, 2007); *Nat'l Urological Group*, 2008 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 44145, at \*43-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Respondents further attempt to bootstrap from *Pearson*'s holding by equating the "potentially misleading" speech subjected to prescriptive regulation there with the implied claims that have been specifically adjudicated in the present case to be actually misleading. RRB at 28. As explained above, however, the two are "completely different animal[s]." *Kraft*, 970 F.2d at 317.

44; *Direct Mktg. Concepts*, 569 F. Supp. 2d at 300, 303; *see also* ID at 80-81, 103. Moreover, those same courts have specifically held that such products can be deceptive if they lack a reasonable basis substantiating the claims made for them. *Natural Solution*, 2007 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 60783, at \*9-10; *Nat'l Urological Group*, 2008 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 44145, at \*76-79; *Direct Mktg. Concepts*, 569 F. Supp. 2d at 298.

Third, Respondents repeatedly assert that the Commission cannot challenge their efficacy representations for the four Challenged Products because those representations were simply "structure/function" claims that are permitted under the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act, Pub. L. No. 103-417, 108 Stat. 4325 ("DSHEA"), which amended the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, 21 U.S.C. §§ 301-399a ("FDCA"). RAB at 3, 4, 12, 45, 46, 51, 52; RRB at 33, 40, 41, 45. Respondents' representations, however, are not "structure/function" claims under the DSHEA. Under the FDCA, such a claim is defined simply as one that describes "the role of a nutrient or dietary ingredient intended to affect the structure or function in humans." 21 C.F.R. § 101.93(f) (2009). The Respondents' representations that the four Challenged Products would treat or cure cancer, prevent or shrink tumors, and ameliorate the side effects of radiation and chemotherapy do not simply describe the "role" that those four products will play in affecting the structure or function in humans. See United States v. Lane Labs-USA, Inc., 324 F. Supp. 2d 547, 568 (D.N.J. 2004); see also Pearson, 164 F.3d at 652. Moreover, DSHEA expressly provides that even compliant "structure/function" claims are permitted only if they are "truthful and not misleading" and the manufacturer "has substantiation" that such claims are true. 21 U.S.C. § 343 (r)(6)(B) (2009). Thus, the DSHEA amendment to the FDCA is not inconsistent with the FTC case law as applied by the ALJ. Indeed, even if the FDCA departed from the FTC Act and its relevant case law, Respondents offer no authority that it would be binding on the Commission.

Fourth, Respondents argue that the ALJ failed to adopt a "flexible standard of substantiation" for their representations and ignored numerous studies supporting those representations, contrary to the FTC's guidelines entitled, *Dietary Supplements: An Advertising Guide for Industry* ("Guide"). RAB at 47-48. The Commission does not agree. The Guide advises the Commission's standard of substantiation for dietary supplements is "flexible," because the standard depends upon the claims made for those products. Guide at 8. The Guide warns that the "FTC typically requires claims about the efficacy or safety of dietary supplements to be supported with 'competent and reliable scientific evidence." Guide at 9. Thus, where, as here, Respondents represented that the four Challenged Products would treat or cure cancer, prevent or shrink tumors, and/or ameliorate the destructive side effects of radiation or chemotherapy, the competent and reliable scientific standard applies under the Guide.

Fifth, Respondents maintain that they only intended to convey the impression that their "Biblical approach to health care – including use of the Challenged Products – could reinforce the naturally healing capability of the body, including the immune system, and thereby provide adjunct support for whatever path – drugs, surgery or other – an individual freely chose to take for their cancer care regimen." RAB at 44. That stated intent is at odds with almost all of the advertisements themselves, which generally did not mention the "naturally healing ability of the body" or that the four Challenged Products could be only an "adjunct" to traditional cancer

treatments. But in any event, the courts have long held that "the subjective good faith of the advertiser is not a valid defense." *FTC v. Sabal*, 32 F. Supp. 2d 1004, 1007 (N.D. Ill. 1998); *see also FTC v. World Travel Vacation Brokers, Inc.*, 861 F.2d 1020, 1029 (7th Cir. 1988).

Finally, Respondents contend that they cannot be held liable for deception because all of the elements of Section 5(n) of the FTC Act have not been proved. That is, Respondents argue Complaint Counsel failed to prove their acts were both unfair and deceptive. That argument is without merit. No case has ever held that deception claims are subject to Section 5(n).

#### D. Due Process Was Not Violated.

Despite Respondents' claims to the contrary, it cannot be said that the ALJ violated Due Process in reaching his findings of fact under a "preponderance of evidence" standard instead of a "clear and convincing evidence" standard. RAB at 11, 27-29. As the ALJ states in his Initial Decision, under both the Administrative Procedure Act and the Commission's rules, the proper standard to be applied in FTC Act cases challenging deceptive practices is the "preponderance of evidence" standard. ID at 66-67. Federal court and Commission decisions respecting those challenges have repeatedly so held. *In re Telebrands Corp.*, 140 F.T.C. 278, 426 (2004), *aff'd*, 140 F.T.C. 278 (2005), *aff'd*, 457 F.3d 354 (4th Cir. 2006); *In re Auto. Breakthrough Sciences, Inc.*, No. 9275, 1998 FTC LEXIS 112, at \*37 n.45 (Sept. 9, 1998); *In re Adventist Health System/West*, 117 F.T.C. 224, 297 (1994); *In re Bristol-Myers Co. v. FTC*, 102 F.T.C. 21, 275 (1983), *aff'd*, 738 F.2d 554 (2d Cir. 1984). Moreover, contrary to Respondents' assertion in their Reply Brief (RRB at 47), those decisions do not simply concern the standard applicable to litigating over whether the FTC has jurisdiction. *Telebrands*, for example, concerned whether certain representations were conveyed in the advertising, and whether they were deceptive. 140 F.T.C. at 427, 449.

Other cases upon which the Respondents rely, Addington v. Texas, 441 U.S. 418 (1979); Stanley v. Illinois, 405 U.S. 645 (1972); and Mathews v. Eldridge, 424 U.S. 319 (1976) (RAB at 26-28), do not hold otherwise. Those cases did not consider the standard of proof applicable under the FTC Act or the standard of proof applicable when the FTC challenges deceptive acts or practices. Indeed, they are entirely inapposite. Stanley simply held that a State may not deprive an unwed father of custody of his children, on the basis of a statutory presumption of unfitness, but must afford an individualized fitness hearing. In the present case, Respondents have been afforded an extensive hearing on the specific charges against them. Mathews set forth general standards for due process procedures, but emphasized the flexibility of the constitutional standard. 424 U.S. at 334-35. The Court there upheld an administrative scheme for the termination of disability benefits without any pre-termination evidentiary hearing – a holding that offers the present Respondents no support. *Id.* at 339-40. In *Addington* – the only case cited that addresses a constitutional requirement regarding the standard of proof – the Supreme Court held that due process requires "clear and convincing" evidence to support the indefinite, involuntary commitment of an individual to a mental institution. 441 U.S. at 431-32. The holding in Addington, respecting an extreme form of deprivation of personal liberty, has no bearing on the present case. Here, Respondents were afforded ample procedural protections, including adjudication under the established preponderance of evidence standard typical of civil

litigation. Their assertions that due process required more than this are without merit.

## E. There is No Reasonable Basis Substantiating the Representations.

## Findings of Fact.

Respondents alleged in their Answer that they possessed and relied upon a reasonable basis that substantiated the representations they made for the four products at issue at the time those representations were made. Answer ¶ 16; RAB at 2. However, Respondents did not conduct or direct others to conduct any scientific testing of the effects of the four Challenged Products. IDF 308, 309, 311, 313, 315. The manufacturers of BioShark and BioMixx likewise did not conduct any testing on those products. IDF 310, 314. Respondents have not produced anything to show that they possessed and relied on any competent and reliable scientific evidence to support the overall net impressions conveyed by the advertisements at issue.

The ALJ considered the evidence presented by Complaint Counsel's expert, Dennis Miller, M.D. and Respondents' five experts, James Duke, Ph.D., Sally LaMont, N.D., Rustum Roy, James Dews and Jay Lehr, Ph.D. IDF 329-425. The only proffered expert who was a medical doctor, had specialized training or experience regarding cancer or cancer treatment, or had conducted clinical studies regarding cancer treatments was Dr. Miller. IDF 329-337. Dr. Miller is a board-certified pediatric hematologist/oncologist who, *inter alia*, has directed clinical care, education, laboratory and clinical research, and administration heading divisions or departments for over forty years at the University of Rochester Medical Center, New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and Northwestern University Medical School. IDF 320-326.

Dr. Miller testified that "competent and reliable scientific evidence" is required to conclude that a cancer treatment is effective. IDF 343. Dr. Miller explained that in order to constitute competent and reliable scientific evidence that a product treats, cures, or prevents cancer, the products' efficacy and safety must be demonstrated through controlled clinical studies (tests on humans). IDF 344, 345. He further testified that studies performed in test tubes or in animals, testimonials and other anecdotal reports are not substitutes. IDF 345, 351-353. He testified that harm potentially may occur from remedies that are alternatives to those that have undergone clinical studies on humans. IDF 356-361. And, he testified that for these reasons, the need to substantiate a claim by clinical studies (*i.e.*, on humans) was the same whether the purported agent was a herbal medicine or a more conventional pharmaceutical agent. IDF 354.

Dr. Miller was asked to determine whether there was competent and reliable scientific evidence to substantiate each of the overall net impressions conveyed by the advertisements at issue about the Challenged Products, and he did so. IDF 327, 344, 345, 351-354. Dr. Miller concluded that the reference materials relied on by Respondents did not constitute competent and reliable scientific evidence that any of the Challenged Products prevent, treat or cure cancer; that most of those materials were not peer-reviewed papers but instead consisted of author opinions and literature reviews; that many of the studies involved *in vitro* or animal studies, not studies on

humans; that others relied on the efficacy or safety of ingredients of the Challenged Products rather than the products themselves and that, absent, evidence that DCO's four products at issue here contained exactly those ingredients in the proportion tested, those studies were not probative; and that there is no competent and reliable scientific evidence that the Challenged Products are effective, either alone or in combination with other DCO products, in the prevention, treatment or cure of cancer, in inhibiting tumor formation, or in ameliorating the adverse effects of radiation and chemotherapy. IDF 362-367. The reference materials on which Respondents relied were of the sort that Dr. Miller testified were not reliable. IDF 368-386.

Respondents did not ask any of their proffered experts to render an opinion as to whether Respondent's purported substantiation materials constituted competent and reliable scientific evidence substantiating any of the overall net impressions conveyed by the advertisements at issue about the Challenged Products. IDF 339. Neither did Respondents ask any of their proffered experts to render an opinion as to whether there existed any such substantiating evidence. IDF 340. Respondents' expert, Dr. Duke, made no effort to determine whether there were any studies of any sort regarding the Challenged Products; he did not analyze any of those products; and he did not know the ingredients of those products. IDF 392-394. Dr. LaMont likewise did not analyze any of the Challenged Products themselves, but only the ingredients in those products, and she did not know the concentration of those ingredients in those products. IDF 401-403. Mr. Roy did not review or obtain any of the Challenged Products or their labels, and he had no idea what ingredients those products contain. IDF 412, 413. None of the experts proffered by Respondents expressed any opinion about whether there was any competent and reliable scientific evidence to support the overall net impressions respecting the efficacy of the four products at issue created by the challenged advertisements. IDF 341, 389, 390, 398, 399, 408, 409, 419, 420, 423, 424.

## Legal Analysis.

Respondents have repeatedly accused the ALJ of improperly engaging in "presumptions," "shifting the burden of proof" away from Complaint Counsel, as well as violating the Due Process Clause and the First Amendment of the Constitution. Thus, in reviewing the ALJ's conclusion that Respondents lacked a reasonable basis substantiating their representations concerning the efficacy of the Challenged Products, it is appropriate to analyze what the ALJ did not do, in addition to what he did do.

First, the ALJ did not treat Respondents' advertising as making "establishment" claims – that is to say, advertising that represents the amount and type of evidence substantiating the product claims made. ID at 100-101. Although the ALJ pointed out that a few of the advertisements did represent that the claims had been proven by scientific testing (ID at 101 (citing IDF 225, 231, 247)), he concluded, "Complaint Counsel has not alleged or argued that Respondents' advertisements constitute establishment claims. Accordingly, the claims at issue are deemed non-establishment claims, and will be evaluated as such." ID at 101.

The result of that conclusion, however, is that in determining the level of substantiation required, the ALJ did not "presume" the truth of Respondents' representations that their claims

were supported a study conducted by "two researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology" or "used by patients involved in clinical studies in cancer clinics." IDF 225 (CX 13); IDF 231 (CX 23 & 24); IDF 247 (CX 18). Instead, the ALJ found the claims to be "health-related efficacy claims," and as a result, under well-established precedent, such claims must be substantiated by "competent and reliable scientific evidence." ID at 101. In addition, to the extent that further analysis for determining the substantiation standard was necessary, the ALJ also analyzed them under the *Pfizer* factors: the type of claim involved, the benefits of a truthful claim, the consequences of a false claim, and the amount of substantiation experts in the field consider reasonable. ID at 102-104; *In re Pfizer, Inc.*, 81 F.T.C. 23 (1972); *QT, Inc.*, 448 F. Supp. 2d at 959; *Nat'l Urological Group*, 2008 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 44145, at \*43-44, 77-79; *In re Removatron*, 111 F.T.C. 206, 306 n.20 (1988); *In re Thompson Med. Co.*, 104 F.T.C. at 821.

Based upon his findings respecting the "overall net impressions" conveyed by Respondents' representations, the ALJ concluded that: (1) the representations made about the four Challenged Products were "health-related efficacy claims" in that they represented that the products would "treat or cure" cancer, eliminate or shrink tumors, and/or ameliorate the adverse effects of radiation and chemotherapy (ID at 101-102); (2) the benefits of truthful claims were substantial because cancer patients would benefit from truthful representations about effective treatment of, or cure for, the disease (ID at 103); (3) the consequences of a deceptive claim were substantial not only because a patient might forego using products or therapies that were effective in treating or curing the relevant diseases, but also (as Respondents acknowledged in their "disclaimers"), because their products could be harmful if used with the other products or therapies (ID at 103); and (4) clinical studies respecting human beings were required because the representations Respondents made concerned the efficacy of the Challenged Products in treating or curing human beings, not animals, or their efficacy in vitro. ID at 103-104.

Taking those considerations into account, the ALJ concluded that Respondents' representations needed to be substantiated by "competent and reliable scientific evidence," including "controlled clinical studies" – *i.e.*, human studies. ID at 104. That conclusion is supported by numerous decisions describing the standard that should be applied when supplements like the Respondents' four products are represented to be effective to treat diseases or medical conditions. *See, e.g., Natural Solution*, 2007 U.S. Dist LEXIS 60783, at \*11-12; *Nat'l Urological Group*, 2008 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 44145, at \*43-44; *Direct Mktg. Concepts*, 569 F. Supp. 2d at 300, 303.

Second, the ALJ did not hold Respondents to the representation they made in their Answer that they had a reasonable basis substantiating their representations at the time the representations were made. The only explanation that the ALJ articulated for not requiring Respondents to tether their proof to "the time the representations were made" was that Complaint Counsel, rather than Respondents, had the burden of proof on all elements of their claim, including whether Respondents had a reasonable basis to substantiate their representations. ID at 67. The Commission considers that conclusion debatable. Respondents specifically averred that they had substantiation at the time their representations were made, and they were in the best position to support their averment. Again, the Commission is not prepared to second-guess the decision by the ALJ. The consequence of that conclusion, however, was that

the ALJ considered abundant *ex post* expert testimony on the issue whether there was *ever* a reasonable basis substantiating the representations.

Respondents repeatedly assert that in assessing the expert testimony the ALJ did not just embrace the substantiation standard he had held was applicable – namely "competent and reliable scientific evidence," including "controlled clinical studies" – but instead required that those studies be "double-blind" and "placebo controlled." RAB at 4, 8, 11-12, 15, 25, 43, 45; RRB at 12, 40-41, 53-54, 57, 59, 65. According to Respondents, that substantiation requirement, combined with the lack of a requirement that "extrinsic evidence" be produced, had the effect of creating a "presumption" that their representations were not adequately substantiated and, indeed, of turning the proceeding into "rulemaking by adjudication" in violation of *Pearson v. Shalala*, 164 F.3d 650 (D.C. Cir. 1999), the Due Process Clause, and the First Amendment of the Constitution. RAB at 4, 11-12, 15-17, 25-26, 43-44, 54-55; RRB at 40, 54-55.

Respondents' claims are without merit. As previously discussed, "extrinsic" evidence to interpret the advertising is not required, as a matter of law. Respondents' reliance on FTC v. QT, Inc., 512 F.3d 858, 861 (7th Cir. 2008), does not assist their argument either. As the ALJ explained in the Initial Decision, although the Seventh Circuit stated that nothing in the FTC Act required a placebo-controlled, double-blind study, it went on to affirm the district court's holding that substantiation for health-related efficacy claims must be based on competent and reliable scientific evidence. ID at 109. Because the ALJ in this case found the Respondents had not possessed or relied upon any adequate substantiation for their claims, the ALJ found their argument that QT does not require a placebo-controlled, double-blind study to be irrelevant. ID at 109. The Commission agrees.

The same thing is true of Respondents' assertion that this case involves "rulemaking by adjudication" of the sort condemned in the Pearson case. RAB at 15-16, 25-26; RRB at 27, 31-33, 44 n.24, 53-54. *Pearson* bears no resemblance to this case. Not only were the agency (the FDA) and the statute (the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act) different than the ones involved here, but the case involved formal rulemaking procedures by the FDA. In *Pearson*, the FDA proposed a rule that would ban all health claims by dietary supplements unless there was "significant scientific agreement" about those claims, regardless of whether or not the claims were deceptive. RAB at 14-16. This case does not involve rule-making or even "amending or bypassing a pending rulemaking proceeding." RAB at 40. This case involves a purely adjudicatory challenge to specific deceptive representations made in advertisements that four specific products would "treat" or "cure" cancer, prevent or shrink tumors, and ameliorate the destructive side effects of radiation or chemotherapy. Most significantly, the substantiation standard used by the ALJ in this case, requiring competent and reliable scientific evidence, including studies on humans is neither "unconstitutionally vague" nor "impossibly high," as Respondents describe the "significant scientific agreement" standard in the FDA's proposed rule. RRB at 27, 31-32, 44 n.24. To borrow the language in *Kraft*, *Pearson* involved "a completely different animal" than the one involved here. Kraft, 970 F.2d at 317.

Nor did the ALJ otherwise use any "assumptions" or "shift the burden of proof" away from Complaint Counsel in his assessment of the expert testimony. RAB at 3, 11, 54-55. To the

contrary, he found, *inter alia*, that Complaint Counsel's witness, Dr. Miller, a board-certified oncologist who had practiced for over forty years at some of the country's most eminent institutions, was the "only witness in this case qualified as an expert in cancer research and cancer treatment" (ID at 103), and that he was the only expert witness who offered an opinion as to whether there was competent and reliable scientific evidence to support Respondents' representations. ID at 103-106. By contrast, the ALJ found that Respondents and their experts had relied, *inter alia*, on in vitro and animal (not human) clinical reports, searches of literature, testimonials without confirmation that the speakers' treatments were not attributable to other clinical modalities or indeed that the speakers had cancer, and tests on the ingredients of the four Challenged Products without confirmation that the ingredients were present in those products in the same proportion to the ingredients tested. ID at 104-105.

Respondents do not contend that these findings lacked substantial supporting evidence in the record. As a result, as the ALJ put it, "none of Respondents' experts offered any opinions on any material, contested issue in the case, and the opinions that Respondents' proffered experts did offer are entitled to little, if any, weight." ID at 106. Put differently, the ALJ simply weighed the evidence proffered by the experts. The way he weighed the evidence, moreover, was consistent with his earlier opinion that although Respondents might have the burden of production of some evidence to substantiate their representations, Complaint Counsel bore the burden of proving that the substantiation was inadequate. ID at 67. The ALJ concluded that Complaint Counsel had borne the burden of proving that Respondents' representations were not substantiated. There was no violation of either the Due Process Clause or the First Amendment involved.

## F. The Remedy is Proper.

Respondents advance several arguments that the remedy is illegal. RAB at 55-65. The Commission has considered each of these arguments, has reviewed the applicable case law and the language of the proposed Order, and has concluded that these claims are without merit. The Commission considers each of these arguments in turn.

Respondents first argue that the recent unpublished decision in FTC v. Lane Labs-USA, Inc., No. 00-CV-3174 (DMC) (D.N.J. Aug. 10, 2009) (appeal pending),<sup>3</sup> "should be instructive and considered here," (RAB at 56-57; see also RRB at 59-60), and that they are "identically situated" to the respondents in Lane Labs. RRB at 34. In doing so, Respondents focus on three statements made by the district court, which were based upon the specific facts and evidence presented in that case: 1) the district court considered the substantiation proffered by Lane Labs and noted, "[t]his is not a case of a company making claims out of thin air;" 2) the district court found that Lane Labs provided credible medical testimony that the products in question are good products and could have the results advertised; and 3) the district court noted that "there has been no physical harm to the public."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The Commission is appealing this decision. *FTC v. Lane-Labs-USA, Inc.*, No. 00-CV-3174 (DMC) (D. N.J. Aug. 10, 2009), *appeal docketed*, No. 09-3909 (3rd Cir. Oct. 13, 2009).

Contrary to Respondents' assertion, they are not "identically situated" to the respondents in *Lane Labs*. *Lane Labs* was a civil contempt proceeding in which the FTC sought a \$24 million compensatory contempt award from the defendants for violating a negotiated consent order. According to the district court, in order to establish contempt, the movant bears the burden of proving by clear and convincing evidence that the respondent violated a court order. *Lane Labs*, No. 00-CV-3174 (DMC), slip op. at 11. The district court declined to find contempt because he found that the FTC failed to show by clear and convincing evidence that the defendants had not substantially complied with the Orders. Accordingly, the standard of proof, as well as the proof required, differentiates the DCO Respondents from the Lane Lab respondents.

And, to the extent that Lane Labs – as an unpublished decision that is being appealed – can be considered "instructive," it does not help Respondents. As in the instant case, the *Lane* Lab Orders required defendants to possess "competent and reliable scientific evidence" (as defined in the DCO remedy) to substantiate any claims made about the health benefits of a product.<sup>4</sup> The *Lane Labs* court specifically found the Orders to be valid and controlling. *Id.* at 12. However, in contrast to the case before us, the medical experts proffered in *Lane Labs* were medical doctors that the district court qualified and found "credible and knowledgeable in their respective fields of expertise." Id. at 8-10. The DCO respondents' experts were not medical doctors and the ALJ found that none of these proffered experts had "specialized training or experience regarding cancer or cancer treatment." IDF 335, 336. Indeed, in contrast to Lane Labs, in preparing their opinions, none of Respondents' experts here had reviewed the advertising claims at issue. IDF at 338. Furthermore, Respondents did not ask their experts to render an opinion as to whether their purported substantiation materials constituted competent and reliable scientific evidence that would substantiate a claim that any of the Challenged Products prevent, cure or treat, cancer (IDF 339), or whether any such evidence existed. IDF 340.

Second, Respondents argue that the remedy is an arbitrary, capricious and retaliatory attack on their constitutional rights. Respondents make many general allegations regarding this claim, but do not cite any case law or other precedent in support of it. Respondents assert that the ALJ used "Respondents' political and religious speech as a weapon against them when he turned to issuing the Remedy." RRB at 36; *see also* RAB at 57. Respondents also claim that the ALJ took the Respondents' political and religious speech and activities into consideration when crafting the remedy, but not when "portraying Respondents as being engaged purely in commerce." RAB at 57.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> "Competent and scientific evidence" was defined as "tests, analyses, research, studies, or other evidence based on the expertise of professionals in the relevant area, that have been conducted and evaluated in an objective manner by persons qualified to do so, using procedures generally accepted in the profession to yield accurate results." *Lane Labs*, slip op. at 12. This is the same definition the ALJ uses in the proposed Order.

As a preliminary matter, the Commission notes that the ALJ did not "portray[] Respondents as being engaged purely in commerce." As the Commission has stated already, this misstates the law and the legal conclusions of the Initial Decision; the ALJ found that Respondents were not a business organized for or engaged in "only" charitable purposes. These two conclusions are not the same. In addition, as discussed earlier in this Opinion, the Commission has already found that the ALJ performed the proper legal analysis in determining the FTC's jurisdiction, *see* section III.A, and Respondents' liability, *see* sections III.C and E. The Commission likewise finds that the ALJ applied the proper standard in drafting the proposed order. Accordingly, the Commission declines to characterize the remedy as "arbitrary, capricious and retaliatory."

Third, Respondents claim that the proposed remedy would violate the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 (P.L. 10-141) ("RFRA"). RAB at 57-60. The Commission disagrees. As Respondents concede, the RFRA only applies to government statutes that "substantially burden a person's exercise of religion." RAB at 58; RRB at 15, 60-61. The Order imposes no burden on Respondents' exercise of religion; it only applies to their commercial advertising. Although Respondents argue the remedy imposes an unconstitutional prior restraint on "truthful speech," (RAB at 61; RRB at 60-63), the speech at issue here was found to be deceptive. As noted in *Central Hudson*, "there can be no constitutional objection to the suppression of commercial messages that do not accurately inform the public about lawful activity." 447 U.S. at 563.

Far from prohibiting truthful speech, Paragraphs II and III of the Order permit Respondents to make any efficacy claims for those products so long as the representations are "true, non-misleading, and, at the time [they are] made, Respondents possess and rely upon competent and reliable scientific evidence that substantiates the representation." In other words, Respondents are only obliged to do that which the case law under Sections 5 and 12 of the FTC Act has defined as necessary to avoid deception. To be sure, that requirement embraces not just the four Challenged Products, but other dietary supplements, foods, drugs or other health and related programs, services or products. However, the case law holds that this is appropriate "fencing in," given the kinds of representations Respondents made and the frequency with which they made those representations. *Telebrands Corp. v. FTC*, 457 F.3d 354, 358 (4th Cir. 2006); *Kraft*, 970 F.2d at 326. The proposed order limits what Respondents may say without

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Once the determination is made that Respondents violated Section 5 of the FTC Act, the Commission has the authority to issue an order requiring respondents to cease and desist from such acts and or practices. *FTC v. Nat'l Lead Co.*, 352 U.S. 419, 428 (1957). The Commission has considerable discretion in fashioning the remedial order, so long as the order bears a reasonable relationship to the unlawful acts or practices. *See, e.g., FTC v. Colgate-Palmolive Co.*, 380 U.S. 374, 394-95 (1965); *Jacob Siegel Co. v. FTC*, 327 U.S. 608, 612-13 (1946).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> The Commission generally considers three factors in determining whether an order bears a reasonable relationship to a particular violation: (1) the seriousness and deliberateness of the violation; (2) the ease with which the violation may be transferred to other products; and (3)

substantiation relating to the sale of certain products, but it does not otherwise reach into the Respondents' religious speech or practices.

Finally, Respondents claim that the requirement that they send a letter to their customers – even as modified by the ALJ – would unconstitutionally encroach on their rights under the religious guarantees of the First Amendment and the RFRA. RAB at 61-65; RRB at 63. Specifically, Respondents claim that the proposed remedy "prohibits truthful speech," is "contrary to Mr. Feijo's right to refrain from speaking at all," forces Respondents "to repudiate publicly their faith in God's revealed truth and be forced to embrace and proclaim as their own the FTC's faith in so-called 'science'," and "compels Respondents to conduct government-mandated speech as a condition precedent to continuing their religious ministry." RAB at 12, 57-64; RRB at 58, 64.

Paragraph V of the Order requires Respondents to send to all consumers who have bought the four Challenged Products since the beginning of 2005 an exact copy of the letter appended to the Order as Attachment A. The ALJ modified the proposed letter attached to the Complaint "to make it clear that the information contained in the letter is information that the FTC has required Respondents to transmit to consumers." ID at 121. Neither the letter nor anything else in the Order compels Respondents to do anything "as a condition precedent to continuing their religious ministry," or forces Respondents to "repudiate publicly 'their faith' in God's revealed truth and be forced to endorse and proclaim as their own the FTC's faith in so-called 'science.'" RRB at 58. Neither does the Commission see any evidence that the ALJ punished Respondents for their political or religious beliefs in his proposed order.

However, in the Order the Commission issues here today, in the interest of brevity, the Commission has further modified the first and second paragraphs of the letter required by Paragraph V (appended to the Order as Attachment A).

#### IV. Conclusion

The Commission, for the reasons stated in this opinion, has determined to deny the appeal of Respondents and to make final the attached Order, which is identical to the order entered by the ALJ, except as to the modifications made to Attachment A, the letter required to be sent to consumers by Respondents.

whether the respondent has a history of prior violations. *See In re Stouffer Foods Corp.*, 118 F.T.C. 746, 811 (1994). All three elements need not be present to warrant fencing-in. *See Sears, Roebuck & Co. v. FTC*, 676 F.2d 385, 392 (9th Cir. 1982). The ALJ considered these factors and found the relief ordered was reasonably related to the Respondents' violations of the FTC Act. Respondents do not seem to challenge the ALJ's analysis of these elements. ID at 120-21.