

Submitter:

Will Sheppy

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB3824

My name is Willard Sheppy, and I am a licensed acupuncturist in Albany, Oregon. I've been practicing for nearly two decades and currently own and operate Valley Health Acupuncture, where I specialize in treating complex pain conditions using acupuncture and Chinese medicine.

I am submitting this testimony to express my strong opposition to House Bill 3824, specifically the inclusion of "needle insertion" (Page 3, Line 37) in the scope of practice for physical therapists.

This term refers to dry needling, a technique that involves the insertion of acupuncture needles into the body to stimulate muscles or nerves. Functionally and legally, this is acupuncture. Under Oregon Revised Statutes ORS 677.757(1)(a), acupuncture is clearly defined as "the stimulation of specific points on the body by the insertion of needles." There is no legal or clinical distinction when physical therapists perform the same act under a different name.

As a licensed acupuncturist, I completed more than 3,000 hours of academic and clinical training, including hundreds of supervised patient treatments, to safely and effectively perform this procedure. By contrast, many dry needling courses for physical therapists offer as little as 20–100 hours of instruction — sometimes in just a weekend.

This vast gap in training poses a serious risk to public safety. Needle insertion is not benign. Over the years, I have personally treated patients who experienced pain, nerve damage, and complications after receiving dry needling from inadequately trained practitioners. These are not hypothetical risks. They are real people who walked through my clinic doors, frightened and in pain, because someone inserted a needle too deeply or without proper anatomical understanding.

The evidence backs this up:

- A prospective study of 20,000 dry needling treatments found an adverse event rate of 36.7%, with 20 major complications including pneumothorax and nerve injury (Brady et al., PM&R, 2014).
- Other studies document similar outcomes, including hospitalizations, nerve palsies, and even bilateral pneumothorax (Majchrzycki et al., 2022; Sahin et al., 2020).

This bill also presents a legal conflict. By authorizing physical therapists to perform a

procedure that falls under the definition of acupuncture, HB 3824 undermines the authority of the Oregon Medical Board (OMB) and circumvents the Acupuncture Advisory Committee tasked with maintaining education and licensure standards. It violates ORS 677.759–765, which prohibits the unauthorized practice of medicine — including acupuncture — by unlicensed individuals.

As a healthcare professional deeply committed to the well-being of my patients and the integrity of Oregon's healthcare system, I urge you to remove “needle insertion” from HB 3824. This language is inconsistent with Oregon law, undermines patient safety, and bypasses vital regulatory protections designed to prevent harm.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,
Willard Sheppy, LAc
Valley Health Acupuncture
Albany, Oregon