

Submitter: Zechariah Heck
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3824

This testimony is submitted in opposition how HB 3824 is currently written. Adding "needle insertion" (Page 3, Line 37) in the physical therapy scope of practice needs to be removed. This term refers to dry needling, a method involving the insertion of acupuncture needles into the skin to stimulate muscle or nerve tissue—essentially the same as acupuncture as defined under Oregon law.

****Legal and Regulatory Concerns****

According to ORS 677.757(1)(a), acupuncture is legally defined as stimulating specific body points through needle insertion. The law also includes the use of mechanical or electrical devices, which are often used in dry needling treatments.

In Oregon, only individuals licensed by the Oregon Medical Board (OMB) under ORS 677.759 are authorized to practice acupuncture. Performing acupuncture—or any needle insertion—without a license is considered unlicensed medical practice under ORS 677.765 and is subject to legal penalties.

Therefore, HB 3824 conflicts with existing Oregon statutes by attempting to allow physical therapists—who are not regulated by the OMB—to carry out a procedure that clearly meets the legal definition of acupuncture.

The Acupuncture Advisory Committee, established under ORS 677.780–785, was created to set standards for acupuncture education, licensing, and scope of practice to ensure public safety. By allowing physical therapists to bypass OMB oversight, HB 3824 undermines this regulatory structure.

****Education and Patient Safety****

Licensed acupuncturists in Oregon must complete between 2,500 and 3,500 hours of education, including 800 to 1,000 hours of supervised clinical training. In contrast, dry needling courses for physical therapists typically involve only 20 to 100 hours of instruction. This significant gap raises serious concerns about patient safety.

Research has shown that adverse effects are more likely when dry needling is performed by those with limited training. One study (Brady et al., *PM&R*, 2014) found that 36.7% of dry needling sessions led to adverse events, including 20 major complications like pneumothorax and nerve injuries.