

Submitter:

Sarah Goetz

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB3824

Dear Committee Chairs,

As an Oregon resident and healthcare consumer, I am writing to urge your support for HB3824. This bill would significantly improve access to timely and effective care by allowing physical therapists to order diagnostic imaging and durable medical equipment, as well as to perform dry needling within their scope of practice.

I am a professional aerialist living with POTS and Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, and this past year I suffered a serious neck injury related to both conditions. I was fortunate to work with a Physical Therapist who specializes in treating circus artists and was extremely familiar with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome which is very rare. Her knowledge and expertise were instrumental in my recovery. Unfortunately, because Oregon law currently prohibits physical therapists from ordering imaging or other necessary medical tools, I was forced to seek additional appointments with providers less familiar with my condition. This resulted in greater financial and emotional cost. I even had to advocate for myself just to be believed by my primary care provider, who lacked familiarity with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome or what aerialists do.

In cases like mine, where a physical therapist is both specialized and highly trained, it is inefficient and unnecessary to require an additional provider to sign off on care. If my PT could have ordered the appropriate imaging or provided access to equipment like a neck brace directly, I would have saved both time and money while receiving more streamlined and effective treatment. At least 13 other states already allow physical therapists to provide this level of care. It is consistent with their extensive doctoral-level training in anatomy, pathology, and differential diagnosis.

In addition, I strongly urge you to support the provision in HB3824 that would legalize dry needling by licensed physical therapists in Oregon. For people with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome like me, conventional treatments such as massage can worsen symptoms. Dry needling offers a targeted and effective alternative that could greatly improve my quality of life if it were available.

Dry needling has been safely performed by physical therapists since the 1990s, with adverse event rates below 0.1 percent. Liability insurers report no increased risk. The Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy affirms that 88 percent of competencies for dry needling are already included in DPT curricula. Multiple state Supreme Courts have ruled that it falls well within the physical therapy scope of practice. Importantly, dry needling is based on western medical principles and targets

specific anatomical structures, distinguishing it clearly from acupuncture.

At a time when Oregonians face significant barriers to care, it is crucial to expand access to safe, evidence-based services delivered by qualified providers. Supporting HB3824 in full would align Oregon with national best practices and ensure residents like me can access the care we need without unnecessary delays or costs.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Goetz  
Portland, Oregon