

Submitter:

Stephen Kuske

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB3824

My name is Steve Kuske, and I have proudly served as a music teacher and band director here in Oregon. I am here today to strongly urge you to support House Bill 3824, a bill that will save lives, improve care, and strengthen our healthcare system for every Oregonian.

Let me share a story that makes this personal: A good friend of mine, someone full of life and energy, started feeling off a couple of years ago. He mentioned it to different healthcare providers, but his concerns were often brushed aside as stress or age. It wasn't until he saw his Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) for unrelated shoulder pain that someone finally listened and looked deeper. His DPT recognized signs that didn't add up. Thanks to that therapist's training, skill, and attention to detail, my friend was referred out for further testing – and they found cancer. Early. He's alive today because a DPT didn't just "treat an injury", they understood the body, recognized red flags, and acted.

That's the level of training and clinical judgment we are talking about. That's what DPTs bring to healthcare in Oregon.

For so many of us, DPTs are the most regular, most trusted, and most attentive healthcare providers we see. They are not technicians. They are highly trained doctors of their profession, capable of making critical decisions that can alter, and save, lives. Expanding their ability to prescribe durable medical equipment, administer vaccines, and perform dry needling is not just logical; it's urgently necessary.

On that point, I've experienced acupuncture firsthand. I've seen some of the opposed testimony focusing on the similarities between acupuncture and dry needling, and let me be absolutely clear: they are not the same. Acupuncture is an ancient, valuable tradition rooted in very different principles. Dry needling, however, is a scientific, anatomy-based physical therapy technique, targeting trigger points and dysfunctions in the muscles. When done by a Doctor of Physical Therapy, who is highly trained in that specific technique and who understands neuromuscular systems at the doctoral level, dry needling is a powerful, precise medical intervention. It must remain part of the DPT's toolbox as it already is in nearly every other state. Patients need it, and they need it from a provider who can diagnose and treat the underlying mechanical issues driving their pain.

Importantly, the abilities outlined in House Bill 3824, including dry needling,

prescribing equipment, using sonographic imaging, and administering vaccines, are already allowed in most other states. They have been proven safe, effective, and essential to improving patient access and outcomes. Oregon risks falling behind while millions of patients elsewhere already benefit from expanded DPT care.

This is not a theoretical improvement. It's a real, immediate chance to save time, save money, and in some cases, literally save lives.

Oregon should be a leader, not a follower, when it comes to modern, accessible, patient-centered healthcare. House Bill 3824 allows us to catch up to the current standards of practice and take a huge step towards better healthcare for Oregon residents.

On behalf of myself, my family, my students, and my friend whose life was saved because a DPT saw what others missed, I urge you: Please vote yes on House Bill 3824.

Thank you for helping to advance and secure the health and wellbeing of all Oregonians.