

Submitter: Jolene Johnston  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3824  
To: Senate Health Committee  
RE: Testimony in Support of HB 3824A – The PT Modernization Act

Dear Chair and Members of the Senate Health Committee,

My name is Jolene Johnston, and I am a physical therapist residing in Portland, Oregon. I am writing to strongly urge your support for HB 3824A, the Physical Therapy Modernization Act.

Oregon's Physical Therapy Practice Act has not been significantly updated since 2005. In the nearly two decades since, the healthcare landscape has transformed dramatically—and so has the level of education, training, and responsibility expected of physical therapists. Yet Oregon lags far behind nearly every other state when it comes to the scope of practice for physical therapists. This disconnect not only undercuts our ability to provide care that is timely, efficient, and evidence-based, but it also directly limits patient access in a system already pushed to its limits.

HB 3824A proposes long-overdue and entirely reasonable updates, including:

Authorizing physical therapists to order diagnostic imaging

Permitting PTs to prescribe durable medical equipment (DME)

Allowing dry needling as part of our treatment approach

Granting the ability to certify disability placards or license plate applications

Protecting the professional use of the term “Doctor of Physical Therapy” (DPT)

Each of these changes would enhance the patient care experience without compromising safety, oversight, or quality. In fact, they would better align Oregon's practice standards with the advanced doctoral-level education PTs now receive—and reflect the practices already adopted by the vast majority of states across the country.

As workforce shortages grow and patients face longer wait times across all sectors of care, we need to make better use of the highly trained professionals already in our system. Physical therapists are ready and able to help fill that access gap, but they need the tools and legal authority to do so. HB 3824A would empower PTs to more

fully contribute to the solution—while easing the burden on physicians and other providers stretched too thin.

In my personal and professional experience, the limitations imposed by the current practice act are not just bureaucratic—they are barriers to better health outcomes. I've seen how much more efficiently and effectively care can be delivered in states with modernized physical therapy laws. Oregon patients deserve that same level of care.

Please support HB 3824A and move our state's healthcare system toward a more responsive, efficient, and patient-centered future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Jolene Johnston, PT, DPT  
Oregon