

Submitter: Alex Norman
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3824

I am writing to express my opposition to proposed HB3824.

While I see the ways this bill creates ease for patients and providers, I am concerned because:

The language of the bill lacks any clarification in regards to how needle insertion provided by physical therapists compares to the needle insertion provided by acupuncturists. Acupuncturists in Oregon have protected our scope in the past, arguing that “dry needling”, which is a highly sought after tool by physical therapists, is acupuncture. The language of this bill does not clarify whether physical therapists can pursue training for, perform, and charge or bill for dry needling. Instead, the bill introduces “needle insertion” to the scope of physical therapists, without any clarification around required training, or how this service will be explained to patients as being any different than acupuncture.

This issue of dry needling/ therapeutic needle insertion outside the context of East Asian medicine is also an issue of appropriation of cultural medical practice. Physical therapists argue dry needling is not acupuncture, which is blatantly inaccurate. Dry needling is a particular acupuncture needling technique, already widely practiced throughout the state of Oregon.

This bill creates confusion for patients. If physical therapists provide therapeutic needling, and so do acupuncturists, how are patients being guided to one or the other? This new bill would encourage physical therapists to offer dry needling to their patients themselves, rather than make a referral to a skilled acupuncturist, who is in a much better position with more thorough training, to provide safe therapeutic needling, and more effective care.

The language of this bill needs to be reworked to elaborate on the scope and intention of needle insertion, otherwise it represents additional noise and confusion for patients in an already confusing landscape of complementary care, and introduces a concerning lack of clarity around adequate training.

Thank you for your time.