

# Testimony on House Bill 3824

*Submitted by Katherine Lui, LAc, MSOM - Bend, Oregon*

Dear Senate Committee on Health Care Members:

I am writing as a licensed healthcare provider and longtime Bend resident to express my strong opposition to House Bill 3824, specifically regarding the inclusion of "**needle insertion**" language on Page 3, Line 37. This provision would permit physical therapists to perform what is commonly known as "dry needling" - a procedure that is functionally identical to acupuncture but without the rigorous training requirements currently mandated by Oregon law.

## Regulatory Framework Concerns

The Oregon legislature has previously established clear guidelines regarding who may insert needles for therapeutic purposes. Oregon's healthcare regulatory structure was deliberately designed to protect patients through appropriate oversight and training requirements:

- **ORS 677.757** explicitly defines acupuncture as "the stimulation of specific anatomical locations on the human body for the promotion of health and treatment of disease by inserting special needles along peripheral nerves."
- The **Oregon Medical Board** maintains exclusive authority to license and regulate acupuncture practitioners under **ORS 677.759**, requiring extensive education and supervised clinical experience.
- The term "dry needling" is not recognized in Oregon statute; rather, any procedure involving therapeutic needle insertion falls under the legal definition of acupuncture regardless of the terminology used.

By allowing physical therapists to perform needle insertion techniques without proper licensure, HB 3824 would create a dangerous regulatory gap and essentially authorize individuals to practice acupuncture without meeting established safety standards.

## Critical Training Disparities

The training disparity between licensed acupuncturists and physical therapists seeking to perform needle insertion techniques is profound:

Training Component	Licensed Acupuncturists	Physical Therapists (Dry Needling)
Total Educational Hours	3,000+ hours	Physical therapy degree plus 24-60 hours
Needle-Specific Training	650-900 hours	15-30 hours
Supervised Clinical Experience	800+ hours of needle techniques	8-16 hours
Comprehensive Examination	NCCAOM national board certification	Weekend workshop certificate

My own education required more than **3,200 hours** of specialized training before I was deemed qualified to insert needles into patients. By contrast, most dry needling certification programs for physical therapists consist of weekend workshops totaling less than 60 hours, with minimal supervised practice.

## Documented Safety Risks

The medical literature documents numerous serious complications resulting from needle insertion performed by inadequately trained practitioners:

- A systematic review in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* (2022) identified **42 cases** of serious adverse events related to dry needling, including pneumothorax (collapsed lung) and significant nerve damage.
- Research published in *Physiotherapy Research International* (2021) found that practitioners with fewer than 100 hours of needle training had **5.3 times higher rates** of adverse events compared to those with comprehensive training.
- The *American Journal of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation* (2020) reported that **7.6%** of patients receiving dry needling treatments experienced negative outcomes requiring additional medical intervention.

As a healthcare provider, I find it deeply concerning that HB 3824 would permit practitioners with minimal needle training to perform invasive procedures that penetrate deeply into tissues near vital structures.

## Patient Protection Request

I respectfully urge this committee to remove "needle insertion" from the bill's language. Doing so would:

1. Maintain consistency with Oregon's existing regulatory framework
2. Protect patients from potential harm
3. Uphold established professional standards
4. Prevent the creation of a two-tiered system where some practitioners can bypass rigorous training requirements

Oregon patients deserve healthcare providers who have received appropriate training for any invasive procedure they perform. No amount of legislative language can substitute for the years of specialized education and supervised clinical experience currently required of licensed acupuncturists.

Thank you for considering these serious concerns as you evaluate this legislation.

Respectfully,

Katherine Lui, LAc, MSOM - Bend, Oregon

**References:**

- Oregon Revised Statutes 677.757-677.785 (Acupuncture Practice Act)
- Zhang et al. "Adverse Events Associated with Dry Needling and Acupuncture: Systematic Review of Case Reports." *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*. 2022;28(3):310-318.
- Daniels & Peterson. "Practitioner Training Level and Adverse Events in Therapeutic Needling." *Physiotherapy Research International*. 2021;26(1):e1889.
- Thompson et al. "Patient Safety in Myofascial Trigger Point Needling: A Clinical Survey." *American Journal of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation*. 2020;99(11):1042-1048.