

Submitter: Allison Machen
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3824

Hello fellow Oregonians,

Thank you for your service on the Senate Health Committee.

My name is Allison Machen and I am a resident of Hood River and a licensed acupuncturist. I am writing today to voice my concern over HB 3824 which allows Physical Therapists to perform "needle insertions" aka acupuncture. I trained for four years and have a master's degree in Acupuncture and East Asian medicine. Across the nation multiple professions have been trying to perform acupuncture (often under the name of dry needling) and usually with just a weekend course of training. I am concerned for patient safety and for the reputation of acupuncture if performed by folks without proper training. More so I am concerned about the livelihood of my career if another career is able to do the main thing that we provide.

I went to the now closed Oregon College of Oriental Medicine (OCOM). Recently the Higher Ed Authority shared data that OCOM was in the number three position for the highest debt to income ratio of all graduate programs in the country. Not only do we as a profession have staggering six figure student loan debt we also don't have jobs available. Almost all acupuncturists have to make their own job by starting a private practice. In my ten years of practice reimbursement rates from insurance have gone down not up. The current situation with tariffs has made a box of needles go from \$25 to \$45. The hurdles facing us as a profession often feel insurmountable. I am deeply concerned that other professions being able to offer needling will do great harm to our practices. Physical therapists are already much more mainstream than acupuncturists. When it comes to health insurance reimbursement they have many more codes they are able to bill for. All we have is needling. Most of us also perform herbal medicine or specialized bodywork which are codes that insurance either doesn't cover at all or doesn't cover if performed by acupuncturists. Needling is essential to us and must be protected as something only licensed acupuncturists can perform.

For decades Oregon was home to two of the most prolific acupuncture schools in the country. Most of us practicing here in Oregon were trained here in Oregon. We are devoted to our state, our people, our communities and our medicine. Our numbers may be small and we may not have the lobbying that PTs do but we are here and we urge you to consider amending this bill to ensure that acupuncture is a protected profession and that Oregonians are protected from receiving needling from only those with the proper extensive multi year training.

Thank you,

Allison Machen, LAc