

Submitter: Nicholas Swanson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3824

I am writing to oppose House Bill 3824, introduced in Oregon's 2025 legislative session, which proposes expanding the scope of physical therapy to include needle insertion techniques, commonly referred to as dry needling. While this measure aims to enhance therapeutic options, it raises significant concerns regarding patient safety due to the limited training physical therapists receive in this area. Dry needling, involving the insertion of needles into muscle tissue, carries risks such as bleeding, bruising, and, in rare cases, serious complications like pneumothorax or nerve injury. A study analyzing over 20,000 treatments reported that 36.7% resulted in minor adverse events, and there were 20 major adverse events, underscoring the necessity for comprehensive training to mitigate these risks.

In contrast, licensed acupuncturists undergo extensive education, often exceeding 1,000 hours, encompassing anatomy, physiology, and supervised clinical practice. This rigorous training is crucial for ensuring patient safety and effective treatment outcomes. A survey of physiotherapists indicated that those with over 100 hours of acupuncture-related training reported better clinical results and higher patient satisfaction. Given the invasive nature of needle insertion and the potential for serious adverse events, it's imperative that such procedures are performed by practitioners with comprehensive training. Therefore, expanding the scope of physical therapy to include dry needling without ensuring equivalent training standards poses a significant risk to patient safety.

Sources:

Adverse events associated with dry needling:
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32089962>

Impact of acupuncture training hours on outcomes and safety:
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10262825>

British Medical Journal review on acupuncture safety:
<https://www.bmj.com/content/338/bmj.a3115>

WHO Guidelines on Basic Training and Safety in Acupuncture:
<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/42959>

Systematic review of adverse events in acupuncture:
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1362953>

Needle-related complications reported in physical therapy contexts:
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7000515>