

Submitter:

Amber Hincks

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB3824

Dry needling is acupuncture. Acupuncturists are trained in many styles of needling, all of which require extensive study to hone this skill and to practice safely.

Acupuncturists train for years to provide safe and effective care. This includes the study of anatomy and muscle trigger points. While some acupuncturists practice more energetic styles, most acupuncturists practice orthopedic styles that would fall under dry needling. That's because pain is the #1 thing that we treat, hands down. And we are great at it. We spend hundreds and then thousands of hours with needles in hand to develop this skill. Abbreviated trainings, as are done by other professions under the heading of dry needling, put the public at risk not just of less effective treatments, but also of harm. Many incidences of pneumothorax have been attributed to dry needling from non-acupuncturists. I have had a pneumothorax from someone who was demonstrating orthopedic styles of needling in a class setting. It can happen and it does more often with these styles. In acupuncture school we are trained to avoid these circumstances while still being effective.

One last note, it is a kind of cultural appropriation to remove needle insertion from its context within Chinese Medicine and call it dry needling. Dry needling is acupuncture. We already have a word for it. Acupuncture already includes styles that are orthopedic. Most of us already specialize in this. Just because we offer other forms of holistic care, does not mean we are not clearly the professionals most suited to offer "dry needling" styles of acupuncture. It is basically the only thing that insurance companies pay us to do. If other professionals would like to offer this to their patients, they can go to school for it, just like we had to. Many programs do not include herbal medicine and try to offer a swift path to acupuncture licensing without leaving out important skills and safety measures.