

Submitter: Amrit Singh
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3824

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the authorization for physical therapists to practice acupuncture in the state of Oregon. While I deeply respect the skills and expertise that physical therapists bring to patient care, I believe that the practice of acupuncture requires a distinct and rigorous educational foundation that extends beyond standard physical therapy training.

Acupuncture is a pillar of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) that involves not just the insertion of needles, but a deep understanding of meridian pathways, Qi (energy flow), and diagnostic principles rooted in centuries of Eastern medical theory. Licensed acupuncturists undergo extensive education, typically completing a minimum of 3,000 hours of training, including supervised clinical practice, biomedical sciences, and Chinese Medicine theory. This comprehensive curriculum is designed to ensure both efficacy and safety in needling practices, particularly when addressing complex conditions.

Dry needling typically involves superficial muscle targeting and is often performed after only a weekend course or short-term certification. This limited exposure does not provide adequate understanding of:

The full meridian system and the interconnectedness of organ health

Contraindications for needling specific points, particularly in vulnerable populations

Safe needling depth to avoid puncturing critical structures

Recognition of adverse reactions and proper emergency protocols

The lack of comprehensive TCM education increases the risk of complications such as pneumothorax, nerve damage, and improper treatment of underlying conditions. Acupuncturists are trained extensively in these areas to minimize risk and ensure patient safety. This is dangerous to the community.

I strongly urge the state of Oregon to re-evaluate the authorization for physical therapists to practice acupuncture without the foundational education required to fully understand this powerful modality. Patient safety, effective treatment, and the integrity of acupuncture as a medical practice depend on a thorough understanding of its complexities, which cannot be adequately achieved through short-term training.

I appreciate your attention to this important matter and welcome any opportunity to discuss it further.

Sincerely,
Amrit Singh