

Submitter: Yuqing Kou
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3824

As a Licensed Acupuncturist in the State of Oregon, I oppose the inclusion of “needle insertion” (Page 3, Line 37) in the physical therapy scope of practice. The term refers to dry needling, a technique that uses acupuncture needles to penetrate the skin and stimulate muscle or nerve tissue—functionally equivalent to acupuncture, as defined in Oregon law. Under ORS 677.757(1)(a), “acupuncture” is explicitly defined as the stimulation of specific points on the body “by the insertion of needles”. The statute further affirms that acupuncture includes the use of electrical or mechanical devices with or without needles, which are also marketed under dry needling protocols.

In Oregon, acupuncture may only be practiced by those licensed by the Oregon Medical Board. Licensed Acupuncturists undergo 2500-3500 hours of training, including 800-1000 hours of supervised clinical education in order to become licensed. This far exceeds the <100 hours of training typically offered in dry needling courses for physical therapists. This is a safety issue for patients, studies have shown increased risks of adverse events when dry needling is performed by inadequately trained providers, including pneumothorax, nerve palsy, and other complications requiring hospitalization. It can take only ONE bad session for a patient to become fearful or distrustful of any needling techniques, even if properly administered acupuncture treatment would greatly benefit them.

For these reasons, the term “needle insertion” should be removed from HB 3824. It is legally inconsistent with Oregon law, compromises patient safety, and bypasses established licensure and oversight standards put in place to protect the public.

Thank you for your time and consideration.