

Submitter: Amanda Woeltje  
On Behalf Of: Acupuncturists against PT dry needling  
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3824

As a Licensed Acupuncturist and Doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine, I Strongly Oppose Physical Therapists Practicing Dry Needling. It is insulting to the field as a whole. I have trained for 4 years in this ancient medicine and care deeply about my patients well-being and safety. Physical therapists being able to practice “acupuncture” without the years of education and clinic hours required puts our patients in danger! My opposition is not about professional turf—it is about safety, efficacy, and ethical responsibility to patients. Licensed acupuncturists undergo 3,000+ hours of rigorous education in anatomy, physiology, diagnosis, needling technique, safety, and clinical supervision. In contrast, physical therapists are often performing dry needling after as little as 20 to 100 hours of weekend seminars. This is an alarming disparity, especially considering the potential risks involved: pneumothorax, nerve injury, infection, and other adverse effects that can occur when needles are inserted improperly.

Moreover, dry needling lacks the diagnostic framework that accompanies acupuncture in Chinese medicine. Without an understanding of the meridian system, differential diagnosis, and pattern discrimination, dry needling becomes a mechanical intervention stripped of context and subtlety. It is the difference between a chef preparing a meal with depth and balance, and someone tossing ingredients together based on a single recipe.

When physical therapists practice dry needling without comprehensive training, they are engaging in a form of unlicensed acupuncture. This not only undermines the integrity of our profession, but it endangers public health by allowing inadequately trained individuals to perform invasive procedures. Patients deserve to know that the person inserting needles into their body has been trained to the highest standards.

In conclusion, dry needling should not be separated from acupuncture to bypass licensing requirements. It is acupuncture in practice, if not in name. If physical therapists want to use these techniques, they should be held to the same standards of training and licensure that licensed acupuncturists are required to meet. Anything less is a disservice to patient care and professional accountability.