

Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care,

My name is Katie Williams LAc, MAcOM, DACM. I am from Mosier, and I am here in opposition to HB 3824, specifically 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.

Physical therapists have their own place in medicine and healing. They have an overall Western medical view of the body and its systems. Acupuncture and Chinese medicine uses a different system for treatments. Unlike the Western view of each point being separate and individual from the rest, acupuncturists know how each point not only affects the local area, but the whole body as a system. There would also be less regulation on what PTs could do as far as treatments go. Would they be allowed to start working on digestive issues, or headaches? Would patients be able to differentiate dry needling from a holistic acupuncture treatment?

This bill seems that it may muddle the clear lines for patients to receive proper care, as musculoskeletal issues are often looked at from a deeper level using acupuncture and Chinese medicine. Unlike PTs, acupuncturists dive deeper into a person's constitution and don't just look at the superficial levels of the body.

The two modalities of PT and acupuncture work well to complement one another. We don't need patients getting confused with superficial treatments that don't work on the overall healing of a body and system.

Legal and Regulatory Conflict

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** under **ORS 677.759**. Unauthorized practice of acupuncture—including any unlicensed needle insertion—is considered the **unauthorized practice of medicine** under **ORS 677.765** and is subject to penalties.

This bill therefore directly **conflicts with established state law** by proposing to allow non-OMB-regulated practitioners (physical therapists) to perform a procedure that falls squarely within the **legal definition of acupuncture**.

The **Acupuncture Advisory Committee** established in **ORS 677.780–785** was specifically tasked with recommending standards for education, licensure, and scope of practice in order to protect the public. HB 3824 undermines this structure by bypassing OMB oversight entirely.

Education and Patient Safety

Licensed acupuncturists in Oregon must complete **2,500 to 3,500 hours of training**, including **800–1,000 hours of supervised clinical education**. This far exceeds the **20–100 hours** of training typically offered in dry needling courses for physical therapists. This discrepancy has serious implications for patient safety.

Numerous studies highlight increased risks of adverse events when dry needling is performed by inadequately trained providers:

- **36.7%** of dry needling treatments resulted in adverse events, with **20 major complications** such as pneumothorax and nerve injury. Major Complications were 1 per 1,024 TDN treatments, The average ratio of minor AE's for all respondents across all weeks was 0.53 or approximately one event for every two patients (Boyce et al., *Int J Sports Ther*, 2020).
- A Polish study reported **3% pneumothorax**, **14% nerve palsy**, and **1% hospitalization** (Majchrzycki et al., *MDPI*, 2022).
- Multiple case reports confirm life-threatening events, including **bilateral pneumothorax** and prolonged nerve damage (Sahin et al., *JournalAgent*, 2020; *Western Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 2013).

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.

Katie Williams LAc, MAcOM, DACM.

Citations:

- ORS 677.757–677.785: Licensing and regulation of acupuncture in Oregon
- Boyce, David et al. “ADVERSE EVENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THERAPEUTIC DRY NEEDLING.” *International journal of sports physical therapy* vol. 15,1 (2020): 103-113.
- Brady S, et al. *Adverse events following trigger point dry needling: a prospective survey of 20,000 treatments. PM&R.* 2014;6(9):847–852.
- Majchrzycki M, et al. *Adverse Reactions to Dry Needling Therapy: Insights from Polish Practitioners. MDPI.* 2022.

- Sahin N, et al. *A Rare Complication Caused by Dry Needling: Bilateral Pneumothorax. JournalAgent.* 2020.
- Boissonnault WG, et al. *Traumatic Pneumothorax Following Acupuncture: A Case Series. Western Journal of Emergency Medicine.* 2013.