

Submitter: Katherine Lui

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3824

I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill 3824, which would allow physical therapists to perform dry needling procedures without the rigorous training and safety standards already established in Oregon's healthcare system.

Oregon has always been a national leader in maintaining the highest healthcare standards, protecting patients through careful regulation of invasive procedures. HB 3824 threatens this proud tradition by allowing practitioners to perform an inherently risky procedure without adequate training.

As you consider this bill, I respectfully ask you to keep these critical facts in mind:

The Safety Gap Is Too Wide

Acupuncturists undergo over 2,500 hours of specialized training before they can safely insert needles into the human body. This extensive education includes comprehensive study of internal anatomy, needle techniques, contraindications, and management of adverse events. In contrast, this bill would permit physical therapists to perform essentially identical procedures with dramatically less training.

Needling Is Not a Minor Procedure

The FDA classifies acupuncture needles as Class II medical devices that must be "restricted to qualified practitioners." There's a reason for this classification - these needles can cause serious harm when improperly used, including:

Pneumothorax (collapsed lung)

Nerve damage

Spinal cord injury

Infection

Internal organ perforation

These aren't theoretical risks. Recent reports document serious and potentially life-threatening injuries associated with dry needling performed by inadequately trained practitioners.

Same Procedure, Different Name

"Dry needling" uses the exact same FDA-regulated medical device as acupuncture, treats the same anatomical points, and achieves the same therapeutic purposes. Simply renaming a procedure doesn't eliminate its risks or the need for proper training.

Protection of Oregon's Healthcare Excellence

Oregon is known for maintaining some of the highest healthcare standards in the nation. This bill would create a concerning precedent of lowering safety standards rather than ensuring practitioners meet established training requirements for invasive procedures.

The Attorney General's Position

In 2017, Oregon's Attorney General specifically determined that dry needling is not within the scope of practice for physical therapists in Oregon. This determination recognized the significant safety concerns associated with allowing invasive needling procedures without comprehensive training.

I urge you to protect Oregon patients by opposing HB 3824. Instead of lowering standards, we should maintain Oregon's commitment to healthcare excellence by ensuring anyone performing needling procedures has completed the appropriate training to do so safely.

Thank you for your consideration of this important patient safety issue.

Respectfully,

Kat Lui