

Submitter: Melanie Misenheimer
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3824
To whom it may concern:

I would like to submit written testimony with my concerns about the use of dry needling by Physical Therapists. As an Acupuncture professional, I have heard many accounts of harm caused in states where this practice is allowed.

1) Physical therapists are not adequately trained in needle insertion in states where dry needling is allowed under their scope of practice. Therefore, they have a high incidence of harm caused via needle insertion due to lack of training.

2) In states where physical therapists are allowed to perform dry needling as part of their scope of practice, they create significant confusion for patients. They don't educate patients that they are minimally trained in needle insertion. As reported from colleagues in states where this is already legal, many patients see the dry needling as the same thing as acupuncture when it is not. This causes patients to think acupuncture won't work for them when dry needling doesn't work for them, which causes patients to not seek care from a modality that is likely to be what is needed when the musculoskeletal based physical medicine treatments don't work. Patients need to be educated by anyone performing dry needling that dry needling is a musculoskeletal focused modality that is also part of what most Acupuncturists offer. In states where this procedure is allowed, patients are not educated and many acupuncturist colleagues have reported finding themselves in the awkward position of having to explain this to patients while not wanting to discount other providers in their area.

3) Based on accounts from acupuncturist colleagues in areas where dry needling is legal, a significant percentage of the time, it does not work for patients, because only the area of pain / tension is being treated instead of treating the whole body. This is due to the physical therapists' lack of training in the modality they are using. Acupuncture / needle insertion is a whole body treatment modality, and treating only one area can create further imbalance, cause the pain to move to another area due to lack of integration, and / or simply just not work. When these scenarios happen in response to dry needling, the Physical Therapist is not educated or trained to be able to respond to or address these patient situations.

Due to these issues, I feel more regulation and training is needed for the physical therapist profession before it would be safe or appropriate to allow them to perform needle insertion.

Sincerely,
Melanie