

Submitter: Erin Brockmeyer
On Behalf Of: HB 3824
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3824

Members of the Senate Committee on Healthcare,

My name is Erin Brockmeyer, and I am an acupuncturist working in downtown Portland. I have been licensed in Oregon since 2007, and I am writing in opposition to HB 3824, specifically to the "needle insertion" portion of the scope of practice for physical therapists. I know people have likely written in opposition to the bill by citing adverse events caused by physical therapists who insert needles. They would be correct. And while I believe that the proposed training for PTs before being allowed to insert needles is woefully inadequate in terms of safety, efficacy, and knowledge, I also think it is bypassing an already settled law. In Oregon, this so-called "dry needling" that PTs would like to add to their scope of practice is already called acupuncture, and as such it can only legally be performed by a licensed acupuncturist or MD (see ORS 677.757). PTs are hoping to encroach on our scope of practice by calling it dry needling, when dry needling is the same exact thing we are trained to do in our hundreds of hours of needling classes. We call it trigger point therapy or sports medicine acupuncture. And it is EXACTLY, FUNCTIONALLY the same.

The difference in outcome, however, is great, because we do not solely focus on releasing a trigger point in an affected muscle. We perform whole systems medicine that aims to not only release the muscle in question (by using trigger point acupuncture) or relieve pain, but also to turn on ancillary muscles that need to fire more effectively, and to help prevent the issue from reoccurring.

PTs are great at what they do: rehabilitate a body by way of exercises and stretches. They are fantastic partners in care, and as a team we can help people recover from horrible chronic or acute issues. What dry needling by an unskilled practitioner accomplishes is not the same as what a licensed acupuncturist can accomplish. Dry needling is intense by nature, and aggravating to the muscles involved. It is an inflammatory procedure. An acupuncturist can utilize dry needling/trigger point therapy as well as other styles of acupuncture, allowing us (LAcS) to aggravate or irritate a muscle and then immediately calm it down and relieve pain. I have had many friends and family in other states who have tried dry needling by a PT, and they all talk about how horribly painful it is. Oftentimes the pain associated with it keeps them from continuing care. As LAcS, we are adept at getting better outcomes partially because we know how to do acupuncture without causing such traumatic pain to the body. Why are we so good at this compared to PTs? Because we spent 3-4 years learning how to do it rather than a weekend or a couple of weekends. Because we

learned all of the anatomy and physiology of the body specifically in order to learn how to treat it adeptly by using acupuncture.

Asking the general public to know the difference (without first experiencing it) between a PT who does acupuncture in the form of "dry needling," and a licensed acupuncturist whose entire skill set is healing the body by needling is too big an ask. Licensing boards exist in part to protect patients and also to make sure that providers are falling within their scope of practice. LAc's are licensed by the OMB and held to strict standards. PTs self license. Who is going to make sure that they perform OUR medicine competently? We have only recently begun to get MDs and the general public to understand the benefits of acupuncture and to take us seriously as health care providers even though we have 3-4 years of medical school and training, and now PTs want to co-opt our medicine. We have separate scopes of practice because we undergo much different medical training. To allow PTs to add "needling" to their scope of practice would be to undermine our entire profession.

Vote No on HB 3824.

Thank you.

Erin Brockmeyer, LAc