

To whom it may concern,

As a physical therapist practicing in Oregon, passage of HB 3824 is vitally important because it recognizes the vital role that PTs play in Oregon's health care system and the rigorous training, education, and experience that PTs bring to serve our patients.

There are key elements to this practice act that will help reduce the overall health care costs for our patients. One example of this is that currently, if I have a 14 year old patient who runs cross country but has started to have shin pain with a pattern consistent with a stress fracture, I have to either refer them back to their pediatrician or send them to urgent care. This means they have to pay for another visit with another provider to receive the same imaging that I could refer them for. Another example might be a 70 year old patient who has back pain that has quickly become constant and is worse at night. After testing the pain is not consistent with a musculoskeletal cause of pain, so I may be concerned about cancer or a more serious medical cause of this pain. Again I would need to refer them to another visit with their Primary Care Doctor or urgent care to get imaging rather than requesting xray and MRI with a follow up call to their provider that we are investigating this.

We have doctoral level education that includes coursework on imaging so we have the education to make the proper referral and the background anatomical/physiological knowledge to know when a referral is necessary.

Additionally we are asking for the ability to practice dry needling. Some that oppose this bill may argue that physical therapists would only take a weekend course to be able to practice dry needling. What this simplistic argument fails to recognize is the thousands of hours of anatomy and physiology education that we receive while in school to receive our doctoral degree. We also learn about dry needling in our doctoral coursework, so the continuing education to become certified in practicing this would be additional to an already strong foundation on the subject.

Lastly, I went to PT school in Arizona, where the scope of practice greatly exceeds the scope of practice here in Oregon. So I have the education and knowledge to treat beyond the level that the state of Oregon currently allows me to. This is frustrating because I love our state, but I would be able to serve patients much better in a state that has a practice act that meets my level of education. If we want to continue to encourage new graduates to work here in Oregon, we must update the practice act to meet the education that they are receiving.

HB 3824A would allow physical therapists to certify a patient's disability placard or license plate application. This ability is vitally important especially given Oregon's shortage of providers and can help ensure that patients get adequate accommodations quickly and without unnecessary delay. As providers who specialize in assessing and improving the movement and function of our patients, it seems reasonable that we also be given the ability to certify whether a patient needs additional mobility assistance.

HB 3824 would also allow physical therapists to prescribe DME to our patients. Again, as the providers who specialize in assessing and improving the movement and function of our patients we should also have the ability to prescribe medical equipment that improves their safety, reduces their pain, and improves their healing.

HB 3824 aligns Oregon with national best practices to enhance patient safety, improve accessibility, and reduce healthcare costs. I urge you to support this legislation for the benefit of Oregonians in need. HB 3824 will help ensure that Oregonian's have improved access to care by allowing PTs in our state to provide care that is consistent with the education, training, and experience of our profession. HB 3824 will align the practice of physical therapy in Oregon with the Model Practice Act established by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy – in some cases expanding care that is available in 46 other states, but currently not available in Oregon.

Sincerely,
Addison Wise, PT, DPT