

Submitter: Sheri Hiefield
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3824

Dear Committee Chairs:

I am an Oregon resident and I am urging you to support HB3824. As a healthcare consumer in the state, allowing physical therapists to order diagnostic imaging and durable medical equipment would improve access to care and facilitate prompt diagnosis.

Within the current medical landscape, if I were to see my PT for an injury and they determine I need imaging or DME like crutches, I would have to make another appointment with either my PCP, urgent care, or go to the ER (at a high cost to me). This dramatically increases the time and money I have to spend on and in the medical system, all for something that my PT is perfectly well equipped to handle. Obtaining a prescription for imaging directly from my physical therapist would save me time and money. At least 13 other states already allow physical therapists to provide this level of care and given their doctoral level training in anatomy, pathology, and differential diagnosis, it is appropriate and in-line with established practice.

Lastly, I urge you to bring Oregon in line with 46 other states and the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy to make the practice of dry needling by a certified and licensed physical therapist legal in the state for the following reasons: Dry needling has been safely practiced by physical therapists since the 1990s with extremely low adverse event rates (less than 0.1% according to multiple large-scale studies), and PT liability insurers report no increased claims related to this practice. Physical therapists receive comprehensive doctoral-level anatomical training, with the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy confirming that 88% of competencies required for safe dry needling are already included in accredited DPT curricula. Multiple Supreme Courts in other states have affirmed that dry needling is distinct from acupuncture and properly within physical therapy scope, recognizing that health professions naturally have overlapping practices that benefit patient choice. In our current healthcare climate where Oregonians struggle with access to care, allowing qualified physical therapists to perform dry needling would increase availability of this evidence-based intervention that has been incorporated into clinical practice guidelines. Dry needling specifically targets functional changes in anatomical structures using western medical principles, which is fundamentally different from acupuncture's approach based on Chinese medicine principles of meridians and energy flow. Supporting HB 3824 in its entirety ensures Oregonians have access to safe, effective care from licensed providers while aligning our state with national best practices.

People need choices and ease of services! Other professionals should not be able to block a trained professional because of some irrational fear that they will lose business. As long as everyone is licensed and qualified it should be a competitive open market. Let the patients decide which providers work best for them. Just like different types of exercise classes like yoga fusion or barre or sculpt or Pilates, cannot block the other from providing people with their services.

In summary, I urge you to support HB3824 in its entirety. Oregonians deserve access to safe, effective, evidence based care by licensed providers.

Sincerely,
Sheri Hiefield