

Submitter: Tara Nikzi
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3824

Opposition Statement to HB 3824

I am writing to strongly oppose HB 3824, a bill that would allow physical therapists in Oregon to perform needle insertion techniques with minimal training. This proposal poses serious safety concerns and undermines the integrity of the acupuncture profession.

Licensed acupuncturists undergo over 3,000 hours of rigorous graduate-level education and clinical training focused specifically on the safe and effective use of needle insertion techniques grounded in thousands of years of established medical theory and practice. In contrast, HB 3824 would permit physical therapists—with only limited instruction—to perform procedures that require deep anatomical knowledge and clinical experience to avoid serious harm.

Physical therapists already have a broad range of treatment modalities at their disposal, including manual therapy, exercise bands, kinesio tape, therapeutic exercise, and modalities like cupping, gua sha (often rebranded as “Graston technique”) and more. They do not need to incorporate a highly specialized and distinct medical practice like acupuncture into their scope—especially without the depth of training required to perform it safely.

Dry needling, as proposed in this bill, is not risk-free. There are documented cases of severe adverse outcomes, including pneumothorax, nerve damage, worsening of symptoms, needle breakage, and the potential for bloodborne pathogen exposure. These are not minor side effects—they can be life-threatening and indicate why comprehensive training is essential before any practitioner is allowed to insert needles into a patient's body.

Furthermore, allowing inadequately trained professionals to perform needling will not only put patients at risk but also devalue the acupuncture profession. Poor outcomes from improperly performed needle techniques could lead the public to question the effectiveness and safety of acupuncture as a whole, despite its proven track record when practiced by trained professionals.

Oregon is home to thousands of licensed acupuncturists and has been a national leader in acupuncture education for over two decades. Patients in need of this care should be referred to the professionals best equipped to deliver it—licensed acupuncturists—not to providers with insufficient training.

HB 3824 has moved forward too quickly, without sufficient stakeholder and professional input or consideration for patient safety. I urge Oregon legislators to protect the public and uphold professional standards by rejecting this dangerous bill.