

Submitter: James Shepherd
On Behalf Of: Physical Therapists
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3824

Washington State recently passed HB1039 restoring the ability of PTs here to use a simple tool, a monofilament needle. A very powerful tool that no professional should own the exclusive rights to, yet acupuncture professionals think they should for some reason...maybe because they use it as a large component of their practice? To this day, after being involved in bringing needling back into the hands of PTs here, I still don't fully understand the resistance. Practicing Physical Therapy is completely different than practicing Traditional Chinese Medicine. This is exactly what I tell my patients whom I perform intramuscular dry needling on, now that I have earned the ability to use this tool in Washington. I also stress that the similarity of what I do and what the acupuncturist does with the needle starts and ends at the needle. We are all here to help our patients, I don't practice acupuncture, and I surly hope acupuncturists don't practice PT. We are separate professions that use a similar tool to do very different things. And now after being able to practice freely for almost 9 months, my patients 100% agree that what I do with the needle is COMPLETELY different than acupuncture.

As you consider all the testimony before you on this bill, please remember that a tool doesn't define a practitioner or a profession nor should it owned by one. Both PTs and LACs are professionals that use different philosophies of care to bring pain relief and restoration of function to our patients and clients. Modernizing the PT scope of practice will give patients the level of care that 46 other states offer, including your neighbor to the north. Please take the time to filter through the fear tactics and the deflections that are designed to confuse and alarm you. I have always been taught that competition breeds better care for everyone. It's why we have anti-monopoly laws in this country. Let everyone practice to the best of their ability with the tools they need to do the best job possible. The best practitioners will always rise to the top, and in the end, the patient's and clients that need help win. And I can only speak for my profession to say that is precisely what we as PTs desire.