



May 8, 2025

Chair Senator Patterson & Vice-Chair Senator Hayden & Members of Senate Healthcare Committee:

I'm writing to ask for your support of HB 3824 to improve patient access to care particularly in rural and underserved communities.

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 physical therapists 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.

As an independent private practice owner in NW Portland, it is challenging to hire staff due to our limited scope of practice. Physical therapists consider relocating to Oregon until they learn that they will not be able to fully practice the skills they have learned in school and are able to practice in most other states. We have a limited workforce which limits patient access. Please help solve this.

Speaking specifically to dry needling. This is a technique utilized nationally and internationally by physical therapists. One of my patients asked that I share her experience moving from the Netherlands to Oregon. These are her words, "In the Netherlands the physiotherapists do dry needling as it is good for direct muscle release. I've found it very effective. For example after I had a car accident and my neck was stiff, my physio used dry needling to release the tension. When I moved to Oregon I actually struggled to find a way to continue to help my neck issue as the PTs are not allowed to do dry needling and I found manual therapy less effective. Also in The Netherlands I saw an acupuncturist every month for 5 years. This was a totally different experience to dry needling. This was the true eastern modality related to overall balance focused on meridians and energy etc. When moving to Oregon I found it a bit confusing actually because it seems some practitioners are using it very much like dry needling...ie more "western" related to direct muscle stimulation / release. Where I come from the two things are separate and you would go to one for one thing and the other for different reasons. For something like muscle tension I would go to a physiotherapist for dry needling, not an acupuncturist." The American Physical Therapy Association reports as of July 2024, dry needling is approved in 39 states and the law is silent in 7 states for a total 46 states. Oregon is one of only 4 states where

dry needling is prohibited. As stated, as a business owner, not having dry needling approved in Oregon, limits the desire for physical therapists in the 46 other states, to move to Oregon. First hand, I have been told this in interviews by therapists considering moving to Oregon. As stated in public in person testimony by the Jeremy (George Fox University) and Justin (South College), dry needling is being taught in many physical therapy education programs. Our Oregon Physical Therapy Licensing Board will ensure training and regulation prior to commencing with this treatment, as testified by Michelle Sigmund-Gaines. A large study by Gattie in 2020 which included over 20,000 encounters showed our safety for dry needling to be the same for acupuncturists with acupuncture of 0.1% for major adverse events.

In regards to imaging, our education includes radiology. Physical therapists have been ordering imaging with the Department of Defense since the 1970's. Literature shows we order appropriately, judiciously, and to a lesser degree. The DOD recognizes physical therapists as neuromusculoskeletal experts. Physical Therapists have been ordering imaging since 1972 in the military services and continue to do so In addition to the physical therapists in the military branches, an expanding number of states include imaging privileges for Physical Therapists, including Colorado, Iowa, Arizona, Nevada, Rhode Island, the District of Columbia (D.C.), North Dakota, New Jersey, Maryland, Wisconsin, West Virginia, and Utah, whereas most states remain silent on the matter. Physical therapists are credentialed for imaging referral in an increasing number of large healthcare systems, including Kaiser Permanente, University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics, MedStar Georgetown University Hospital (DC/VA), and St Luke's University Health Network (NJ/PA). Physical therapists in rural settings can be in difficult positions with limited primary care physicians available, leaving only a hospital emergency room to send patients to refer for imaging, which also increases the cost for the patient and healthcare system.

The ability to order DME is critical for my colleagues in pediatric physical therapy. The therapist will assess the pediatric patient and send the information to the physician to then order. This process delays the patient from getting the equipment they need which is often related to movement and mobility.

Part of the bill is the protection of the terms of PT (physical therapist), DPT (Doctor of Physical Therapy), and physical therapy. The term DPT is being used by a national gym which has a location in the Portland metro area. This is a misrepresentation of professional designations within the field of physical therapy. Our clinic patients who are members of this gym are reporting confusion thinking the personal trainers are physical therapists. One of my patients is a family practice physician and he was quite concerned about the misrepresentation for his patients . Life Time Fitness, is currently utilizing the trademark 'DPT': Dynamic Personal Training' for their fitness program. There are individuals at LifeTime that become "Dynamic Personal Trainers." Our profession believes that this use of the acronym 'DPT' is and will further cause confusion among consumers, as this abbreviation is widely recognized in the field of physical therapy as representing the Doctorate in Physical Therapy, a professional degree held by over 99% of physical therapists in the United States, according to data from the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE).

The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) officially recognizes 'DPT' as the abbreviation for the Doctorate in Physical Therapy. However, Life Time Fitness's use of the same abbreviation for their Dynamic Physical Training program is causing unnecessary confusion and has the potential to mislead consumers about the nature and qualifications associated with their services and potential harm to patients. In addition to the issues with Life Time Fitness, one of our patients prior to coming to our clinic was at a chiropractic clinic with a physical therapy prescription from their surgeon. The patient was not told that no one at the clinic was a physical therapist. It wasn't until they had a follow up with their surgeon that he recognized the clinic as a chiropractic clinic and that the clinic was not qualified to provide prehab physical therapy for surgery. These examples show the need for term protection to help ensure patients can make informed decisions and receive the appropriate and qualified care needed. Our bill will provide term protection to prevent misrepresentation and protection of consumers and patients. Term protection is necessary to ensure clear communication in the health and wellness industry and to prevent any misinformation that may impact consumer decisions. We believe that respecting professional designations are essential for maintaining transparency and credibility within the healthcare sector.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am on the Government Affairs Committee for the American Physical Therapy Association Oregon Chapter. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions or concerns.

Please support expanded access to care for Oregon patients -- can I count on you to vote yes for HB 3824?

Sincerely,
Sasha Kolbeck, DPT
Rose City Physical Therapy
Co-owner
1515 NW 18th Avenue, Ste 400
Portland, OR 97209