
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE PHYSICAL THERAPY PRACTICE ACT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the physical therapy
2 practice act was established in 1985, when healthcare was
3 focused on the curing of illness. Since that time, health care
4 has evolved to a greater focus on the prevention of illness and
5 disability, with the growth of evidence-based treatment
6 intervention options for patient care.

7 The legislature further finds that dry needling is a
8 therapeutic intervention tool that is used in conjunction with
9 other physical therapy interventions in order to improve
10 patients' movement and function to treat chronic pain. It is
11 recognized by the American Physical Therapy Association, the
12 American Academy of Orthopaedic Manual Physical Therapists, and
13 the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapists and has
14 been utilized effectively to treat neuromuscular pain in
15 specific pain populations, such as chronic pain, opioid
16 dependence, work restrictions, and disability.



1 The legislature additionally finds that the educational
2 qualifications for physical therapists have increased since the
3 practice act was established, with all new graduates now at the
4 doctoral level. Entry-level physical therapy programs provide
5 more than eighty-six per cent of the relevant knowledge
6 requirements for competency in dry needling, including
7 evaluation, assessment, diagnosis and plan of care development,
8 documentation, safety, and professional responsibilities. This
9 additional advanced training is almost solely related to the
10 knowledge and psychomotor skills relating to needle technique,
11 such as palpation and selection, placement, handling, and
12 manipulation of needles.

13 The legislature also finds that dry needling is recognized
14 as a skilled intervention within the scope of physical therapy
15 practice in all but seven states, California, Florida, Hawaii,
16 New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington. Local therapists
17 practicing in federal facilities, patients who benefited from
18 its use in prior treatments, and therapists who have used it in
19 their practice in states that permit it all support dry needling
20 in Hawaii.



1 The legislature further finds that under existing law,
2 physical therapists are prohibited from breaking or puncturing
3 good skin integrity through surgery or injection. This
4 prohibition was originally intended to ensure that physical
5 therapists did not perform surgery and medical procedures
6 outside the scope of practice and education of physical
7 therapists. However, the existing law does not allow for modern
8 techniques in physical therapy that are within the scope of
9 physical therapy practice and education.

10 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to perform a study
11 to determine if the scope of practice for physical therapists
12 should be expanded to include dry needling treatment and
13 therapy.

14 SECTION 2. The legislative reference bureau shall conduct
15 a study of the laws and regulations regarding dry needling
16 therapy in other states as they pertain to the practice of
17 physical therapists. This study shall consider:

- 18 (1) The scope of practice of both physical therapists and
19 acupuncturists in other states in which physical
20 therapists are permitted to perform dry needling
21 techniques and therapies;



- 1 (2) The market share of acupuncturists and physical
- 2 therapists in other states; and
- 3 (3) Any external factors leading other states to adopt or
- 4 refuse to adopt laws or regulations allowing physical
- 5 therapists to perform dry needling techniques and
- 6 therapies.

7 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



Report Title:

Physical Therapy; Dry Needling; Study

Description:

Requires the Legislative Reference Bureau to perform a study to determine if the physical therapy practice act should be amended to allow physical therapists to practice dry needling. (HB701 HD1)

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