

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 1042

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As of March 20, 2015

**Title:** An act relating to clarifying that the physical therapist scope of practice does not include dry needling.

**Brief Description:** Clarifying that the physical therapist scope of practice does not include dry needling.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Cody, Gregerson, Van De Wege and Moeller.

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/09/15, 71-25.

**Committee Activity:** Health Care: 3/12/15.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

**Staff:** Evan Klein (786-7483)

**Background:** Licensed physical therapists may perform a variety of services, including the following:

- examining, evaluating, and testing individuals with mechanical, physiological, and developmental impairments, functional limitations in movement, and disability or other health and movement-related conditions;
- alleviating impairments and functional limitations in movement;
- performing wound care services;
- reducing the risk of injury, impairment, functional limitation, and disability related to movement;
- engaging in administration, consultation, education, and research; and
- spinal manipulation – after being issued an endorsement.

A person must either be a licensed physician or have other statutory authority to penetrate human tissue with a needle. The practice of dry needling is neither specifically allowed nor prohibited in statutes and rules relating to the scope of practice for physical therapists.

**Summary of Bill:** It is specified that dry needling is not included in the term physical therapy for purposes of licensing and regulating physical therapists. Dry needling is defined as the insertion of a solid filament needle through the skin for a therapeutic effect. Dry needling includes intramuscular stimulation, intramuscular manual therapy, trigger point dry needling, and intramuscular needling.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: There has been no legislation or legislative intent to allow physical therapists (PTs) to practice dry needling, and PTs would need a bill to allow them to practice dry needling. Dry needling is acupuncture and acupuncture is regulated by the state. This bill would uphold the Legislature's authority to determine scope of practice for health care practitioners. This bill is about public safety.

CON: Dry needling is therapeutic intervention which is allowed under PTs' current scope of practice. Many PTs safely perform dry needling throughout the state and dry needling is a useful tool for treating patients, including athletes. Current PT curriculums sufficiently train PTs to practice dry needling. This bill will severely limit access to health care.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Cody, prime sponsor; Leslie Emerick, Curtis Eschels, Chris Huson, WA East Asian Medicine Assn.

CON: Elaine Armantrout, Michael Tankovich, Nancy Mansell, Susanne Michaud, Physical Therapy Assn. of WA; Amy Hollingsworth, citizen.

**Persons Signed in to Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.