



Board of Physicians

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Damean W.E. Freas, D.O., Chair

2022 SESSION POSITION PAPER

BILL NO.: SB 711 – Health Occupations – Licensed Athletic Trainers – Dry Needling Registration
COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
POSITION: Letter of Opposition

TITLE: Health Occupations – Licensed Athletic Trainers – Dry Needling Registration

POSITION & RATIONALE:

The Maryland Board of Physicians (the Board) respectfully submits this letter of opposition for Senate Bill (SB) 711 – Health Occupations – Licensed Athletic Trainers– Dry Needling Registration. The Maryland Board of Physicians traditionally does not take positions on scope of practice matters. However, the Board has several non-scope related concerns regarding SB 711.

First and foremost, SB 711 requires the Board to create a registration process for athletic trainers who meet the requirements to perform dry needling. Athletic trainers already have an existing process for approval of specialized tasks that require additional training and education. The Maryland Medical Practice Act requires licensed Athletic Trainers to submit specialized tasks for approval with proper documentation from a supervising physician. This process includes a description of the specialized tasks, documentation of competencies, certification, credentials or other requirements. If it is determined that dry needling should be within the accepted scope of practice for athletic trainers provided they have received adequate training, the existing specialized task procedure is the appropriate way for the Board to verify this training and approve the task. Creating a separate registration process on top of the existing approval process for specialized tasks is unnecessary.

Second, the Board has concerns with the language regarding exceptions to the educational requirements in SB 711. Section (e) allows athletic trainers to be “grandfathered” in if they completed a substantially similar education course prior to June 19, 2018, while section (f) provides similar exceptions for those who obtained training out of state. The Board requires clear standards for licensure and registration whenever possible. Unclear educational standards can present public health concerns if it leads to individuals practicing without sufficient training. The Board believes all licensees should be held to the same educational standards.

Finally, the Board seeks clarification as to the licensed health care practitioner who would be overseeing the hands-on instruction described on page 3, lines 10 through 17.

Based on these concerns, the Board respectfully opposes SB 711. However, the Board is happy to work with the sponsor and stakeholders to establish a process that complements the Board's current structure moving forward.

For more information, please contact Matthew Dudzic, Health Policy Analyst, Maryland Board of Physicians, 410-764-5042.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Damean W. E. Freas".

Damean W. E. Freas, D.O.
Chair, Maryland Board of Physicians

The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Maryland Department of Health or the Administration.