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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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SB 711

Health Occupations – Licensed Athletic Trainers – Dry Needling Registration

Good Afternoon Chair Pendergrass, Vice-Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee;

I am pleased to introduce SB 711-Health Occupations - Licensed Athletic Trainers - Dry Needling Registration. This Bill passed the Senate on March 18 with a vote of 45 to 1.

This is a very important bill for our state athletic trainers (AT's), athletes, and to the educational institutions in the State. AT's from the Baltimore Ravens, Baltimore Orioles, University of Maryland, United States Naval Academy, and Towson University all support this bill. 26 States already allow athletic trainers to perform dry needling on their athletes only.

Dry Needling (DN) is a skilled intervention that uses a thin filiform needle to penetrate the skin and stimulate underlying myofascial trigger points, muscular, and connective tissues for the management of neuromusculoskeletal pain and movement impairments. It is used to treat parts of the muscle and deeper layers of muscles which hands and fingers cannot reach, and it works faster than massage at relaxing the muscles. My husband had dry needling for a ham string injury, physical therapy did not help, but he had immediate relief with dry needling.

Our universities and professional sports teams are recruiting athletic trainers from other states who are certified to dry needle, but once these professionals move to the state, they are unable to practice this modality. Why? Because the Board of Physicians has said dry needling is not within the current scope of practice for an Athletic Trainer. With the addition of the amendments added in the Senate, the Board of Physicians supports this addition to the scope of practice for Athletic Trainers.

You may remember from your testimony on the House Bill, allowing the trainers to perform dry needling helps the students who are juggling class schedules, workouts, practice and games because this can be performed right at their schools.

This bill establishes a licensing process for athletic trainers to perform dry needling under the almost identical standards as Physical Therapists, Chiropractors and Acupuncturists. Amendments to the bill address the concerns of the Board of Physicians, they now support the bill.

We have met with representatives from the MD Chiropractic Association, Maryland Physical Therapist Association, and MedChi. These groups understand that this bill requires the Athletic Trainer's to meet or exceed the same requirements as other providers. They did not have any immediate concerns or suggested amendments.

Dry needling is performed, where allowed by state law, by a number of providers including Athletic Trainers, physicians, nurses, physical therapists, chiropractors, and acupuncturists. In fact, again Athletic Trainers can already dry needle in 26 other states and the District of Columbia.

Attached are responses to several inaccurate statements you may have received from the opposition to SB 711.

I respectfully request a favorable vote on SB 711.