

# Support Athletic Trainers' (AT) Ability to Perform Dry Needling in MD



## What is dry needling?

The use of 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 treats 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. Deactivation of the trigger points can bring immediate relief of symptoms, which cannot be obtained by any other treatment.

## Can AT's practice dry needling in MD?

No. But AT's in at least 26 other states and Washington DC can.

**7 States** allow AT's to dry needle through regulation or the AT practice act. **Arizona, Delaware, West Virginia, Nevada, North Carolina, South Carolina & Illinois**

**19 States and DC** consider dry needling a method of treatment available to athletic trainers without specific statutory authority

## Knowledge and Education

A 2019 study showed that approximately 89% of the skills required for dry needling treatments are taught during professional, entry level AT programs. AT's acquire the remaining 11% of skills through dry needling educational courses.<sup>1</sup> This percentage is higher than Physical Therapists who receive approximately 86% of their skills in said courses.

This bill adds dry needling to the AT's scope of practice using the exact same requirements for a physical therapist to practice dry needling.

## Why is it important that MD AT's be able to practice dry needling?

A number of AT's in MD are educated and trained in dry needling but are unable to utilize such skill because it is not in the AT scope of practice. This includes AT's relocating to MD from another state that permits AT's to dry needle.

AT's are interested in adding dry needling to their clinical practice, including those working for MD's professional sports teams, universities, and the armed forces.

## Performance of Dry Needling by MD AT's Will Require Demonstration of Sufficient Education, Training, and Physician Direction

The MD Board of Physicians will determine the educational requirements necessary to demonstrate appropriate education and training in dry needling. Based on review of available dry needling courses and precedent set for Maryland physical therapists, MATA proposes 40 hours of dry needling specific instruction through Board of Certification approved courses as a minimum to establish education and training. This is the same requirements as physical therapists.

For more information or to discuss, please contact **MATA Legislative Chair Jane Miraglia** at [jane.miraglia@gmail.com](mailto:jane.miraglia@gmail.com) or **MATA's Legislative Consultant Sarah Peters** at [Speters@hbstrategies.us](mailto:Speters@hbstrategies.us).

## Dry Needling, Combined With Other AT Treatments, Can Help the Following Conditions:

- Acute and chronic tendonitis/tendinosis
- Athletic overuse injuries
- Baseball throwing related tightness/discomfort
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Chronic pain conditions
- Frozen shoulder
- Groin and hamstring strains
- Hip pain and knee pain
- IT band syndrome
- Muscle spasms
- Neck and lower back pain
- Repetitive strain injuries
- Shoulder pain
- Tennis/golfer's elbow
- Other musculoskeletal conditions

<sup>1</sup> Hartz, Brian V.; Falsone, Sue; and Tulimieri, Duncan (2019) "Current Athletic Training Educational Preparation for Dry Needling," *Journal of Sports Medicine and Allied Health Sciences: Official Journal of the Ohio Athletic Trainers Association*: Vol. 4 : Iss. 3 , Article 5. DOI: 10.25035/jsmahs.04.03.05