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House Bill HB1016

Position of Maryland University of Integrative Health

OPPOSE

House Health and Government Operations Committee

March 8, 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in OPPOSITION of House Bill HB106

Maryland University of Integrative Health (MUIH) is a graduate university that has the broadest array of integrative health and wellness programs of any college or university in the country. We offer over 20 degrees which includes Master's Degree in Acupuncture, Master's Degree in Acupuncture with a Chinese Herbal Medicine Specialization, Doctor of Acupuncture, and Doctor of Acupuncture with a Chinese Herbal Medicine Specialization.

We have been providing acupuncture services and education in Maryland since 1975, were the first acupuncture school accredited in the United States, and are the only acupuncture school located in Maryland.

This Bill expands the practice scope for athletic trainers to perform dry needling, and creates registration with the Board of Physicians for athletic trainers performing dry needling who have completed dry needling training requirements of 80 hours. The Bill provides for an exemption to further training for those who completed continuing education courses before 2018 and those who performed dry needling in another state. The Bill also provides a sanction for those who perform dry needling without being registered.

Dry Needling is an invasive procedure wherein needles are inserted through the skin into muscle and related tissue. The act of penetrating the skin is potentially dangerous, and without the proper education and training, could result in significant patient injury and harm including a pneumothorax, which is the collapsing of a lung, hemorrhage, nerve damage, and infections, to name a few. The Board believes that Athletic Trainers, whose minimum required education is a bachelor's degree, do not have sufficient education to perform dry needling with 80 hours of additional education pertaining to exclusively dry needling.

The act of piercing the skin and contacting or exposing the internal terrain of the body carries with it a myriad of possible after-effects, many of which can be damaging and even dangerous



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to the health and well-being of a patient. This is the main reason that licensed acupuncturists in our

State, as well as the entire country, are required to have over 1800 hours of educational training in acupuncture, 400 of which must be hands-on, clinical, before they are granted a license to practice. As part of the East Asian medicine training related to acupuncture points, acupuncture education includes point location and associated risk factors, training on adverse events, infection control, patient position, information about the correct length, gauge, filiform or other types of needles, needling technique, insertion techniques (such as angle, depth, stretching skin), needle manipulation, needle retention time, needle removal techniques, and contraindications. Their education also includes extensive biomedical training such as anatomy, physiology, pathology, pathophysiology, differentiation of normal and abnormal structures and functions of body systems from a biomedical perspective, and recognition of signs, symptoms, and morbidities associated with common medical conditions and all relevant to patient safety when needling. The entry level degree for licensure in Maryland is a Master of Acupuncture and many practitioners go on to complete a doctorate in the field.

In summation, dry needling is a potentially dangerous medical technique that requires significant education and training to prevent significant patient injury and harm. Athletic trainers lack the necessary underlying academic education to safely perform the invasive procedure of dry needling. In contrast to physical therapists and chiropractors who almost universally have doctorate level degrees with substantially more depth and breadth of relevant medical foundations and acupuncturists who have biomedical training and specifically train for hundreds of hours of needling techniques and safety protocols, athletic trainers lack the foundational fundamentals. With a mere 80 hours of training athletic trainers cannot be brought to the level of competency necessary to safely perform dry needling.

For all of these reasons, Maryland University of Integrative Health, respectfully urges, for the safety of the public, that the Committee vote unfavorably on HB 1016.

Thank you for considering our testimony. For any questions on our comments, please contact Marc Levin, president, mlevin@muih.edu.