

February 6, 2023

Dear Senators and Representatives,

On behalf of the thousands of patients I have treated as a Maryland Licensed and National Board Certified Acupuncturist, I am writing to you today for your help, and IN OPPOSITION to the expansion of acupuncture (aka dry needling) being added to the scope of Athletic Trainers in our state. I disagree that a “4-day course with over 25 hours of hands on training that include physical therapists and chiropractors,” is a benchmark for high quality delivery of acupuncture services. Acupuncture is an invasive procedure that if performed by those without extensive training will ultimately put the public at risk for procedural complications that include, but are not limited to, pneumothorax, puncture of other internal organs such as the liver, or injury to the spinal cord and nerves. These dangerous conditions can lead to collapsed lungs, difficult surgeries that require extended medical attention--and can even lead to fatalities. The Athletic Trainers did not include this information in their bills, which further indicates their lack of understanding of the practice of acupuncture, its risks and constraints.

By comparison, acupuncturists, who are Licensed Acupuncturists by statute, require a minimum of 3-4 YEARS of didactic/clinical training.. Prior to our Practice Act, Maryland acupuncturists were jailed and fined for practicing surgery without a medical license. If it was important to safeguard the public from an invasive procedure then it should be equally important now. Medical doctors who have far more baseline training in invasive procedures, have determined that the minimum training of already licensed medical doctors is 300 hours in order to practice acupuncture. How can Athletic Trainers determine they need so little training to practice an invasive procedure for which they are ill-prepared?

Did you know that the American Medical Association, representing MD's nationwide, and the American Academy of Medical Acupuncture, representing MD's who practice acupuncture, both have issued formal opinions against the practice of acupuncture by allied health professionals? These medical organizations have determined that the training currently received by chiropractors and physical therapists (which are more hours than proposed for Athletic Trainers) is inadequate and a threat to public safety. These organizations and medical doctors urge the public to only receive acupuncture (also known as dry needling) only from licensed acupuncturists and medical doctors who have received 300 additional hours of training in acupuncture.

If sports teams, the US Olympic circuit, or anyone else wants to deliver the highest quality of care when PERFORMING ACUPUNCTURE, they should hire acupuncturists or develop a strong referral network with the more than 1100 Acupuncturists currently licensed by the state of Maryland, or the 35,000 Licensed Acupuncturists nationwide. We are not denigrating the education that Athletic Trainers, Physical Therapists, or Chiropractors receive when learning their craft. However, they are dismissive of the extensive training licensed acupuncturists receive, that is necessary to safe practice. If better health outcomes are the purpose of their expansion of scope, then they should be equally sincere about the education and training needed to keep the public safe. Please reach out to the members of the [Senate Finance Committee](#) & [House Health & Government Operations Committee](#) to tell them to **PUT YOUR CONSTITUENTS' SAFETY FIRST!** Vote NO on [SB232](#) TUESDAY FEBRUARY 7TH and [HB172](#) on February 15th!!! Tell the stakeholders to WORK TOGETHER to ensure patient best practices for safety and come up with a solution that doesn't negatively impact any of the practitioner groups or the patients they provide medical services for.

Warm Regards,

Lisa Marie Price, L.Ac., Dipl.Ac.