

Delegate Joseline Pena-Melnyk, Chair
Room 241
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 13, 2023

Re: HB0172 – UNFAVORABLE – Health Occupations – Licensed Athletic Trainers – Dry Needling Approval

Dear Chairwoman Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Committee:

My name is Dr. Hilary Patzer, DACM, L.Ac. I have been a Licensed Acupuncturist in Minnesota for 14 years. I have worked for a professional sports team for the past seven years and I work on 1000's of athletes annually. I received my Masters in Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine in 2009 and my Doctorate in Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine in 2020. I then received my 400-hour certification in Sports Medicine Acupuncture in 2022. All told I have over 6 years of education in Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine with a focus on sports medicine. I have extensively studied anatomy and each of my treatments are at least 70% anatomically based.

I strongly oppose bill HB172. Allowing dry needling to be added to athletic trainer's (AT) scope of practice with such low training requirements is setting a very low standard of care for patients receiving this treatment. Not only are the patients not going to receive the same quality of care that they would receive under a more sufficiently trained provider, but the risk of adverse events is significantly higher given the lower standard of training. Physical therapists (PT), chiropractors, and athletic trainers, amongst others, refer to the form of acupuncture they utilize as a dry needling. Dry needling is a component of acupuncture that was taken from acupuncture, isolated, watered down by separating it from the rich history, knowledge, and evidence that supports it, and rebranded as a stand-alone practice. No matter what name it is given, dry needling is in its entirety, a part of acupuncture. Although dry needling should not practice retained needles, the way PTs and ATs use it in practice is to retain needles and attach electro-stimulation to the needles. This is not the form of dry needling that was developed by Dr. Janet Travell in 1942. She did a quick insert with a hypodermic needle into a trigger point, she did not use the thin filiform needles we use today. Dry needling was only focused on affecting trigger points, yet what PTs and ATs are doing today is absolutely acupuncture, done with a tiny fraction of the training required by Licensed Acupuncturists (L.Ac). What the ATs are proposing is 80 hours compared to the 2,500+ hours required for acupuncturists by the national licensing board. Even a medical doctor is required to have 200 hours of classroom with 100 hours of supervised treatments before they are able to needle on their own. I don't think anyone would suggest that PTs or ATs have more training in anatomy and body systems than an MD!

Further, only 80 hours of training total does not allow for the full understanding of the power of the needle. That one needle does not just change the body part it is inserted into, it alters the

hormones, it changes the cellular level, it changes the blood flow, the persons digestion, breathing, emotions, sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system, the entire body. This is a systemic treatment and when done by a PT or AT, it is done without knowledge and respect to that fact. They are treating the whole body without understanding this simple yet powerful point. Unknowingly treating a person's whole body is incredibly dangerous. For simplicity, would you allow me to repair the elevator you rode in today with only 80 hours of training? Would you let me adjust your neck with only 80 hours of training? Would you allow me to diagnose and treat your child athlete with only 80 hours of training? Just because someone wears contacts and knows how to put them in their eyes does not mean the person is qualified to be an optometrists. If these examples seem absurd, its because they are, but so is the difference between the training, knowledge, and understanding between PTs and ATs versus Licensed Acupuncturist when performing acupuncture.

Acupuncture is an invasive procedure and should only be done by practitioners who comprehend and respect the fact that it is a systemic treatment. Our bodies are not compartmentalized, everything impacts everything. When you take a medication internally, you can not confine it to one area of the body, it has far-reaching effects. Acupuncture is the same, that one needle has a systemic impact that carries with it incredible benefits but also incredible danger when placed in the wrong hands. Allowing someone with only 80 hours of training to insert needles into a person is reckless and dangerous. I oppose bill HB172 and SB232 because I care about the safety and efficacy of acupuncture and all the patients treated using dry needling and acupuncture.

Thank you so much for your time and attention of this matter of public safely!

Dr. Hilary Patzer, DACM, L.Ac

Below you will find a link which highlights the significant tissue damage, requiring a day or two to of recovery, to a Washington Capitals player. It clearly outlines that the aggression of dry needling, done by a practitioner with minimal training, causes adverse effects the majority of the time. What is astonishing, is that many PTs and ATs don't recognize that multiple day recovery from their treatment is an adverse effect because they lack sufficient understanding of how to use the needle to get the desired result with minimal negative impact. There is a time with a pro-inflammatory response is desired, but there is no need to cause massive tissue damage to reach that goal, in fact, the additional damage is not necessary and only causes pain and tissue damage. This treatment done by a properly trained acupuncturist would be far more effective, far less painful, and result in much quicker turnaround time.

[Nic Dowd provides an update on his lower-body injury after missing four games \(russianmachineneverbreaks.com\)](http://russianmachineneverbreaks.com)

The link below is a podcast in which I was interviewed about the differences between acupuncture and dry needling. If you have 30 minutes, it will provide a clear picture on why bill HB172 must be defeated.

[Creating Wellness From Within: Acupuncture vs. Dry Needling with Dr. Hilary Patzer on Apple Podcasts](#)

Attached you will find a document (safety dn vs acupuncture) that shows that serious adverse events for acupuncturists are less than 1 in 125,000 but it is just under 1/1000 patients for physical therapists. This is a shocking difference and shows the danger of allowing other professionals to practice acupuncture with so little training.