

02/07/2023

Re: Written Testimony in Opposition to HB 172
Attention: Maryland House Health and Government Operations Committee

Dear Honorable Delegates,

As a resident of Queen Anne's County and a Maryland licensed acupuncturist I am asking you to vote no on HB 172, which seeks to expand the scope of practice of athletic trainers to include dry needling, another term for acupuncture appropriated by physical therapists to skirt State acupuncture licensing laws.

Athletic trainers are not healthcare providers. Athletic trainers are not subject matter experts in acupuncture. I am a licensed acupuncturist as well as a certified phlebotomy technician. I am confident when I tell you, as a subject matter expert in the diagnostic and therapeutic use of needles, the 80 hrs of training HB 172 proposes is insufficient to learn the fine motor skills needed to safely apply acupuncture/dry needling.

Acupuncture/dry needling is an invasive procedure with inherent risks to patient safety. Our great State acknowledged these risks when it created the Maryland Board of Acupuncture to oversee and limit the issuance of acupuncture licenses to qualified practitioners. Injuries caused from dry needling performed by unqualified practitioners have been serious and long lasting. Across the country and in Maryland, skin, blood and bone infections, lung punctures, lung collapse, nerve damage, paralysis, and loss of consortium have been reported in an increasing number of malpractice lawsuits arising from physical therapists performing dry needling after a weekend training workshop. HB 172 would expand the market for these workshops and increase the risk of serious harm to our neighbors, families and friends.

Please help ensure patient safety by voting no on HB 172.

Sincerely,

Lee Andrew DeLorme, L.Ac., CPT
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