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Our Vision

Transforming the diverse communities in Maryland to advance health and wellness by optimizing

February 9, 2026

The Honorable Heather Bagnall, Chair
House Health Committee
Taylor House Office Building, Room 241
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: House Bill 374- With Amendment, support

Dear Chair Bagnall,

The American Physical Therapy Association Maryland is writing to propose an amendment which we feel is an important clarification for this legislation.

The purpose of this legislation is to “require the State Acupuncture Board, on renewal of a license, to make available proof of renewal to each licensee rather than issuing a renewal certificate. The bill prohibits a person from employing an individual to practice acupuncture without a license or aiding or abetting the unauthorized practice of acupuncture. A violator is subject to specified fines and/or imprisonment, as well as a civil fine of up to \$10,000. The bill also defines “manual therapies,” clarifies the definition of “practice acupuncture,” and updates the name of the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine (formerly the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine).”

Manual therapy is a foundational element of physical therapy practice, grounded in a rich historical tradition and a robust evidence base. It includes a broad range of techniques used to evaluate and manage diverse conditions and is recognized by the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) as an essential professional skill and core component of physical therapy education and clinical practice.

In order to avoid any confusion within Maryland’s licensed health care provider community, who provide similar services we propose the following amendment:

Amendment No. 1: On page 2 after line 16 insert a new F(3) which reads:

(3) THE PROVISIONS OF § 1A-101 F(1) AND F(2) MAY NOT BE CONSTRUED TO LIMIT, DEFINE OR AFFECT THE RIGHT OF ANOTHER LICENSED HEALTH CARE PROVIDER TO PERFORM MANUAL THERAPIES AS PERMITTED IN THEIR HEALTH OCCUPATION SCOPE OF PRACTICE.

Rationale:

In 2015 legislation, HB 979 and SB 580, regarding Acupuncture was introduced to require that for physical therapists to perform dry needling that they would have to register with the Physical Therapy Board. In order to register with the Board, the bills would have required that a physical therapist satisfies educational and clinical requirements that had to be developed in collaboration with the Board of Acupuncture. These educational and clinical requirements were to be at least as stringent as the requirements for a physician to practice acupuncture as a discipline, not just dry needling. Due to the significant concerns raised HB 979 was withdrawn by the sponsor.

In 2021 legislation, HB 404 and SB 303, was introduced to amend acupuncturists scope of practice that would have limited, defined or affected the right of another licensed health care provider to use lasers, dry needling or therapeutic exercise in the practice of physical therapy. As a result of the multitude of concerns from other health occupations, the specified terms were removed, and legislation passed.

In Georgia there was similar legislation that had language authorizing acupuncturists to perform dry needling placed into their licensure act. The Georgia Composite Medical Board ruled that even though physical therapists had been performing dry needling, because it was not authorized specifically in their practice act, it was a procedure limited to acupuncturists. By specifically claiming a procedure as unique to the profession of acupuncture, it thereby limited other providers from providing a service they had long performed.

In order to avoid confusion with respect to “manual therapies”, we urge the Committee to adopt the proposed amendment or similar clarifying language.

With this amendment we, the American Physical Therapy Association Maryland, are poised to support this bill. Without this clarification we unfortunately will not be able to support HB374.

Sincerely,

Roy Film, PT, DPT
President, APTA Maryland

Lind Horn, PT, DScPT
Director for Government Relations