

29 June 2020

Dear Economic Affairs Interim Committee Member,

I am writing regarding the concern put forth that Doctors of Chiropractic Medicine (D.C.) should be limited from providing treatment known as dry needling. I am not sure who is challenging this treatment as being within the legitimate scope of D.C.s' practices, but my understanding is that the concern may be arising from members of the acupuncture provider community.

I have been a longtime consumer of chiropractic care *and* acupuncture. I also owned and operated a well-respected massage school in Oregon for almost a decade (I am a current Montana resident). I include that because based on that experience I am highly aware of both Western and Eastern approaches to physical treatment. I believe, from my educated lay perspective, that there is a significant difference between acupuncture and dry needling techniques and, as a consumer, I want my chiropractor to continue to provide dry needling treatment.

Acupuncture is based on the Eastern ("Oriental") model of the human body's energetic system – the meridians – and is designed to clear energetic blockages along those meridian pathways. Dry needling, on the other hand, is a form of soft-tissue treatment based on the western model of myo-fascial release (MFR), designed to release adhesive tissue that creates binding and restriction in the musculo-skeletal system.

To me, dry needling is a very logical treatment for chiropractors to provide, as their job is to treat the imbalance and misalignment of joints in the body, which are frequently impacted by adhesions & restrictions in soft tissue, specifically fascia. Unless these fascial adhesions and restrictions are addressed, adjustments for joint mobility and alignment will not "hold," because the bound fascia will pull the joints back to their misaligned or immobile state. In order to provide dry needling, DCs must be trained and certified in the technique; they already have doctoral level training in their field of joint and musculo-skeletal treatment.

There is an additional critical issue for the committee to consider. Dry needling treatment is significantly effective in the treatment of pain and soft tissue rehabilitation. ***To limit this modality solely to acupuncturists is not in the best interest of Montana healthcare consumers.*** Improving access to a valuable treatment modality, when there is already limited access to "standard" providers in rural and non-urban areas (not to mention alternative medicine practitioners such as acupuncturists) is crucial. This reason, in and of itself, should be reason to include it in the scope of practice for chiropractors in the state.

I ask the committee to maintain chiropractors' ability to provide dry needling treatment as part of their legitimate scope of practice in the state of Montana. Thank you for your consideration.

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