



**August 13, 2020**  
**Economic Affairs Interim Committee**  
**Montana State Capitol**  
**1301 E 6th Ave, Helena, MT 59601**  
**Re: Dry Needling Discussion**

Dear Madam Chair and Members of the Economic Affairs Interim Committee,

On behalf of the 104 licensed acupuncturists in the state of Montana, the Montana Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (MAAOM) Board of Directors has reviewed the proposed dry needling rule by the Board of Chiropractors and find it lacking in educational requirements and oversight to safely allow the practice to move forward. Our decision is based on our own education and experience as well as the statutes and Administrative Rules of other states. Dry needling is considered a form or subset of acupuncture and without adequate education and understanding of the proper techniques, permanent physical damage can be caused to a patient. To practice acupuncture a minimum of six years of education and a masters or doctorate degree is required. This equates to approximately 105 credits and approximately 1905 hours of classroom and practical education, of which 805 hours are associated with dry needling. The 12 hours of classroom time proposed by the chiropractors simply isn't adequate.

After reviewing the chiropractors proposed rule, the MAAOM Board of Acupuncturists looked carefully at some of the surrounding states to determine how they define dry needling and if they allow chiropractors to practice it. Dry needling has been defined in statute in Wyoming, Utah, North Dakota, Colorado and New Mexico as the treatment and rehabilitation for neuromusculoskeletal conditions. California, Oregon, and Washington do not allow dry needling. Other neighboring states, UT, ND, CO, NM, allow chiropractic acupuncture and require a 100-hour course and pass a test. The definition in Montana Chiropractors Rule ARM 24.126.2103(1)(a) to (3) states "the procedure can also be applied to specific muscle motor points, spinal segments, and other structures including ligaments, tendons, and joint capsules for pain relief and increased mobility." This definition would allow the Montana chiropractors with 12 hours to perform dry needling at the same level as other states requiring 100 hours of classroom time to perform Chiropractic Acupuncture(CA). Furthermore, requiring a test provides an additional level of proof the practitioner has adequately acquired the knowledge to perform dry needling and provide the public with a level of safety they deserve.

In Montana, we have MCA (37-13-104(1)(b): "A doctor of medicine, osteopathy, chiropractic, dentistry, or podiatry may not practice acupuncture in this state unless that doctor has completed a course and passed an examination in acupuncture as required by this chapter." This would be the 100-hour course. We feel with the language that is used with the proposed rule, it is attempting to side step taking the 100-hour course by calling it Dry Needling. We also feel that they need to have more hands on and face to face learning time and not just a 12-hour weekend course.

Our neighboring state of North Dakota requires that chiropractors have 50 hours of face to face training to practice dry needling. Dry needling is defined by North Dakota in 17-02-04-07. "Dry needling is a method of treatment and rehabilitation for neuromusculoskeletal conditions. Dry needling is based on western medical concepts, including the art of examination, diagnosis, and case management." "The face-to-face course of study must be sponsored by an institution accredited by the Council of



Chiropractic or its equivalent or another course of study deemed appropriate by the board. When the verification of required hours of training is provided to the board, the board shall issue the chiropractor a letter confirming that the chiropractor is authorized to practice dry needling.”

North Dakota also has needle acupuncture for chiropractors which is the 100-hour CA course, with the test that is required if they are doing anything other than neuromusculoskeletal needling. Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah also have a separate form for patients to sign when they are receiving Dry Needling. This explains the possible effects of the treatment and states what it is used for, which is neuromusculoskeletal issues.

Colorado explains that “Dry needling is a physical intervention that uses a filiform needle to stimulate trigger points, diagnose and treat neuromuscular pain and functional movement deficits; requires an examination and diagnosis, and treats specific anatomic entities selected according to physical signs. Dry needling does not include the stimulation of auricular or distal points and cannot be presented as acupuncture.”

It is evident that the rules the Board of Chiropractors has proposed falls woefully short of the education and training needed to safely perform dry needling, a limited form of acupuncture. Furthermore to be licensed in the state of Montana, Acupuncturists must be licensed through the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) before they can be licensed to practice in the state.

It is our recommendation that in order for a chiropractor to perform acupuncture, they must complete the 100-hour course with testing to receive the Chiropractic Acupuncture certification. If they would like to perform dry needling that excludes spinal segments, ligaments, joints capsules, and tendons which is less than the CA certification, they must receive 50 hours of face to face education. We believe when expanding a scope of practice, healthcare related boards such as this need oversight whether through the legislative process or through the board of medical examiners.

Thank you for your time and dedication to the safety of all Montanans. We look forward to any questions or comments you may have.

Sincerely,

The Montana Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine  
Lisa Brown, Executive Director  
Jennifer Holloman, President  
Gavin McClure, Vice President  
Tanja Brekke, Treasurer  
Jacy O’Neill, Secretary