



ARIZONA STATE BOARD OF PHYSICAL THERAPY
4205 NORTH 7TH AVENUE, SUITE 208 PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85013
(602) 274-0236 Fax (602) 274-1378
www.ptboard.az.gov

Dry Needling Update

On July 24, 2014, the provisions of SB 1154 become law in Arizona. The bill has several components and time frames that impact the profession. Physical therapists in Arizona should understand all of the components of SB 1154 before determining how it may impact their practice and place of employment. If you have any questions regarding dry needling or the implementation of SB 1154, please contact Charles Brown, Executive Director at charles.brown@ptboard.az.gov or (602) 274-1088.

Major Parts of SB 1154:

1. The Legislature has established a definition of dry needling for physical therapists. (A.R.S. §32-2001(4) The definition is effective July 24, 2014 and provides as follows:

"DRY NEEDLING" MEANS A SKILLED INTERVENTION PERFORMED BY A PHYSICAL THERAPIST THAT USES A THIN FILIFORM NEEDLE TO PENETRATE THE SKIN AND STIMULATE UNDERLYING NEURAL, MUSCULAR AND CONNECTIVE TISSUES FOR THE EVALUATION AND MANAGEMENT OF NEUROMUSCULOSKELETAL CONDITIONS, PAIN AND MOVEMENT IMPAIRMENTS.
2. Effective July 1, 2015, failing to demonstrate professional standards in training and education by a physical therapist, as established by the Board in rule, in the performance of dry needling is grounds for disciplinary action. (A.R.S. §32-2044(25))
3. No later than July 1, 2015, the Board must establish professional standards of training and education in rule. The Board is exempt from the rulemaking requirements of title 41, chapter 6, Arizona Revised Statutes, Administrative Procedures, for one year.
4. A licensed physical therapist in Arizona who was performing dry needling as a therapeutic modality before January 1, 2014 may continue to perform dry needling. Once the Board adopts rules establishing the standards of care and training and education qualifications, licensees will be required to meet the standards of care, and training and education qualifications in order to continue providing such therapeutic modalities. Any licensee who began performing dry needling after January 1, 2014, must cease and desist providing such therapeutic modalities until the licensee meets the standards of care, and training and education qualifications, as adopted by the board.

Current Activity:

1. The Board is currently reviewing general categories of standards in education and training required in other jurisdictions for dry needling.
2. Following the Board's review of education and training in other jurisdictions, the Board will initiate a public process to receive input on possible standards of education and training from interested stakeholders. Any proceeding related to Dry Needling will be public and allow for input as the Board works to create the new standards.
3. Once draft rules have been written, the Board will release the draft rules with sufficient time to receive additional input and allow for possible changes before publishing of any final rules.

Additional Information:

1. SB 1154 in no way allows a physical therapist to practice acupuncture, or use the terms *acupuncture* or *acupressure* unless the physical therapist also holds a licensure to practice acupuncture in Arizona.
2. If a physical therapist chooses to undergo training or education in dry needling between January 1, 2014 and July 1, 2015, the physical therapist should be aware that the education may not meet the standards the Board is currently creating in rule.
3. If a physical therapist practices dry needling in violation of the provisions detailed in SB 1154, the Board may take action to include investigation and discipline of the physical therapist's license.
4. The Board will investigate standard of care violations related to dry needling while the new standards of education and training are in development. Any violation of standards of care may result in discipline under A.R.S. §32-2044(4) and A.R.S §32-2047.
5. Only a physical therapist may perform dry needling in accordance with A.R.S. §32-2001(4). (Effective July 24, 2014). No provision in SB 1154 allows a physical therapist to delegate a dry needling intervention to assistive personnel.