Title 10
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
Subtitle 38 - BOARD OF PHYSICAL THERAPY EXAMINERS

10.38.12 Dry Needling


ALL NEW

.01 Scope
This chapter establishes standards for the provision of dry needling as a physical therapy intervention.

.02 Definitions
A. In this chapter, the following terms have the meanings indicated.
B. Terms Defined.
   (1) “Board” means the State Board of Physical Therapy Examiners.
   (2) “Dry needling” means a physical therapy intervention, also known as intramuscular manual therapy, that:
       (a) Involves the insertion of one or more solid needles, a type of mechanical device, into or through the skin to
           effect change in muscles and tissues for the purpose of alleviating identified impairments;
       (b) Requires constant evaluation, assessment, and re-evaluation of the impairments; and
       (c) Is not performed for the purposes of detoxification, smoking cessation, or stress relief.

.03 Education and Training Necessary to Perform Dry Needling
A. In order to perform dry needling, a physical therapist shall have at least 230 total hours of instruction to include:
   (1) At least 100 hours of instruction in the following areas:
       (a) Surface anatomy;
       (b) Musculoskeletal system;
       (c) Skeletal muscle physiology;
       (d) Anatomical basis of pain mechanisms, myofascial pain, referred pain, and chronic pain;
       (e) Trigger points; and
       (f) Infection control, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s Bloodborne Pathogen Protocol, and
           safe handling of needles;
   (2) At least 80 hours of instruction in the following dry needling-specific course content areas:
       (a) Theory and application of dry needling;
       (b) Dry needling technique, including spine and extremities;
       (c) Dry needling indications and contraindications; and
       (d) Documentation of dry needling; and
   (3) At least 50 hours of practical, hands-on instruction in dry needling under the supervision of a licensed
       healthcare practitioner competent in dry needling procedures who has completed the requisite coursework.
B. The instruction in dry needling-specific course content areas shall include an assessment of competency.
C. All dry needling-specific instruction under this regulation shall involve contemporaneous, face-to-face interaction
   between the physical therapist and the instructor in real time.
D. A physical therapist may not fulfill any portion of the practical, hands-on instruction required under §A(3) of this
   regulation with online or distance learning.
E. A physical therapist shall have practiced physical therapy for at least 2 years before the provision of dry needling
   in the State.
F. Upon request of the Board, a physical therapist practicing dry needling shall provide documentation that
   substantiates appropriate training as required by this regulation.

.04 Standards of Practice in Performing Dry Needling
A. A physical therapist shall:
   (1) Explain dry needling to the patient in advance of treatment; and
   (2) Obtain written informed consent that will be included in the medical record.
B. A physical therapist shall perform dry needling in a manner consistent with standards set forth in the Maryland
   Occupational Safety and Health Act, Labor and Employment Article, Title 5, Annotated Code of Maryland.
C. A physical therapist shall document the provision of dry needling services in accordance with the documentation
   requirements of COMAR 10.38.03.02-1.
D. Dry needling is not within the scope of practice of limited physical therapy and shall only be performed by a licensed physical therapist.

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