

# Title 10

## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

### Subtitle 38 - BOARD OF PHYSICAL THERAPY EXAMINERS

#### 10.38.12 Dry Needling

Authority: Health Occupations Article, §§13-101, 13-206, and 13-309, Annotated Code of Maryland

#### 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.

**END NEW**