To Senator (insert name here):

On February 25, 2020, Senator Scavello sent a memo to all the members of the Senate requesting consideration for co-sponsorship of a dry needling bill for Physical Therapists. Shortly after that time, the COVID pandemic became a reality in Pennsylvania with everyone shifting their focus to managing emergency issues.

I am sending this request to ask you to consider becoming a cosponsor for the legislation Senator Scavello is willing to champion. This legislation would explicitly state ability of physical therapists to perform dry needling in the Pennsylvania Physical Therapy Act (Act 38 of 2008). The use of dry needling within the physical therapy intervention is a common practice, is within the scope of practice of a physical therapist and aides in the non-pharmacological management of pain and other neuromuscular conditions.

It is important to note that dry needling is not acupuncture but rather is a technique used within the physical therapy session. The use of a needle has precedent under the Pennsylvania Physical Therapy Practice Act and Regulations for the use of needles by Physical Therapists providing nerve conduction studies (EMG’s) in aid of diagnosis of conditions.

Physical therapists have dry needling concepts in the entry level curriculum supported by education in anatomy, pathology, clinical sciences, clinical interventions and applications, biomechanics, kinesiology and neuroscience. Post graduate training courses are available which complete the remaining knowledge to fully understand and apply dry needling for patient/clients.

In addition, this legislation would allow improved access to physical therapy by revising the time period that a physical therapist may treat an individual without a referral to 90 days, a timeframe consistent with other state practice acts and contemporary standards of practice. To maximize patient access and outcomes, this bill would eliminate the separate direct access certification requirement as the majority of practicing physical therapists as well as all new graduates now have an entry level doctorate degree. The first entry level doctoral degree was offered in 1996 with models of doctoral programs being developed since the 1980’s. Since the passage of direct access legislation in Pennsylvania 20 years ago, physical therapists have been safely and effectively treating patients and clients in the Commonwealth without a referral.

This important legislation would allow patients/clients to receive dry needling as part of the physical therapy session. Skilled and licensed physical therapists with post graduate education would provide dry needling. Improving access to physical therapists would ensure the right care could be provide to the right patient/client for maximum benefit and thus return function and mobility.

Thank you for your consideration.

Type or sign your name here