

211. Requirements for Physical Therapists to Perform Dry Needling (Effective 1/11/2019)

- A. Dry needling is a physical intervention that uses a filiform needle to stimulate trigger points, diagnose and treat neuromuscular pain and functional movement deficits; is based upon Western medical concepts; requires an examination and diagnosis, and treats specific anatomic entities selected according to physical signs.
- B. The performance of dry needling in accordance with this Rule is not the performance of acupuncture as defined in section 12-29.5-102, C.R.S., and is not a violation of section 12-29.5-105, C.R.S.
- C. Dry needling as defined pursuant to this Rule is within the scope of practice of physical therapy. A physical therapist must have the knowledge, skill, ability, and documented competency to perform an act that is within the physical therapist's scope of practice.
- D. To be deemed competent to perform dry needling, a physical therapist must successfully complete a formalized course of study that:
 - a. Includes a minimum of 46 hours of which 40 hours must in-person education. Any education hours received in addition to the above may include both in-person and remote learning;
 - b. Includes specific knowledge and psychomotor objectives;
 - c. Includes clinical decision-making;
 - d. Includes written and psychomotor assessment of knowledge and skills conducted by a provider as defined in Section G below; and
 - e. Have practiced for at least one year as a licensed physical therapist.
- E. If the required course of at least 46 hours of dry needling training is broken up into more than one part, then a physical therapist is permitted the limited practice of dry needling once he or she has completed each part of the training as long as such practice is confined to the scope of the training already successfully completed, and with the understanding that all parts of the coursework will be successfully completed within two years of the start date of the course.

If the physical therapist has not completed at least 46 hours of dry needling training within 2 years, then he/she must stop performing dry-needling at any level until he/she has completed at least 46 hours.
- F. Needling in areas where there is a risk of pneumothorax or where neurovascular compromise could be life-threatening, shall be included after the licensee has been educated and has had the opportunity to practice in lower risk areas.
- G. A provider of a dry needling course of study must meet the educational and clinical prerequisites as defined in this Rule, paragraph D above and demonstrate a minimum of two years of dry needling practice techniques. The provider is not required to be a physical therapist.
- H. Physical therapists performing dry needling in their practice must have written informed consent for each patient where this technique is used. The patient must sign and be offered a copy of the informed consent form. The consent form must, at a minimum, clearly state the following information:
 - 1. Risks and benefits of dry needling, including but not limited to the risk of pneumothorax and infection; and
 - 2. The physical therapist's level of education and training in dry needling.

- I. When dry needling is performed, documentation must include a description of the technique, tissues treated, and post treatment assessment.
- J. Dry needling shall not be delegated and must be directly performed by a qualified, physical therapist, including needle removal and post treatment assessment.
- K. Dry needling must be performed in a manner consistent with generally accepted standards of practice, including but not limited to clean needle techniques, and the guidelines and recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC") and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration ("OSHA").
- L. A physical therapist shall supply written documentation, upon request by the Board, which substantiates appropriate training as required by this Rule. Failure to provide written documentation, upon request, is a violation of this Rule, and is prima facie evidence that the physical therapist is not competent and not permitted to perform dry needling.