

Mississippi Council of Advisors in Acupuncture

September 25, 2012

OFFICIAL POSITION PAPER: DRY NEEDLING BY PHYSICAL THERAPISTS

Introduction

The Mississippi State Board of Physical Therapy proposed to expand their scope of practice to include the performance of Dry Needling. The Oral Proceeding was held at the request of the Mississippi Council of Advisors in Acupuncture on July 24, 2012 and this scope of practice change was approved by the Physical Therapy Board and was scheduled to be effective on September 10, 2012.

The Mississippi Council of Advisors in Acupuncture sent a request to the Attorney General to get an Official Opinion. The Attorney General concluded that

"In conclusion, it is the opinion of this office that the "Physical Therapy Board acted within the scope of its authority when promulgating the proposed rule including the use of needles for therapeutic treatment as a technique within the scope of the statutory definition of the practice of physical therapy. It is also the opinion of this office that the statutes regarding the definitions of acupuncture and the unlicensed practice of acupuncture can not be used to interfere with or limit physical therapists who are performing IMT or dry needling under the licensing authority of the Physical Therapy Board."

Discussion

On July 27, 2012, the Mississippi Council of Advisors in Acupuncture approved a motion that stated "the position of the Mississippi Council of Advisors in Acupuncture is that Dry Needling is synonymous with the practice of Acupuncture and is a de facto practice of Acupuncture as defined in Mississippi Code 73-71-5". We concluded that Physical Therapists are not medical doctors and are not licensed acupuncturists. Any Physical Therapist performing "Dry Needling" or "Trigger Point Needling " is performing acupuncture and is in violation of Mississippi Code 73-71-15 and 73-71-37.

Mississippi Code 73-71-5 states "Acupuncture" means the insertion and manipulation of needles to the body, and the use of Oriental medicine and other modalities and procedures at specific locations on the body, for the prevention or correction of any disease, illness, injury, pain or other condition.

Allowing physical therapists to practice dry needling/acupuncture in Mississippi does not best serve the health care needs nor preserve the health care safety of the residents of Mississippi. Public Safety has been a major concern by the Medical Board. Physical Therapists are only required to obtain 50 hours of Seminar Training in Dry Needling with no Continuing Education specified. Mississippi Licensed Acupuncturists must have 2,500 hours of education including clinical practice and maintain 30 hours of continuing education every 2 years. The Rules and Regulations of the Mississippi Medical Board of Medical Licensure also states that:

"Acupuncture may be performed in the state of Mississippi by a physician licensed to practice medicine and adequately trained in the art and science of acupuncture. Adequately trained will be defined as a minimum of 200 hours of AMA or AOA approved Category I CME in the field of acupuncture. Such licensed individuals wishing to utilize acupuncture in their practice may do so provided that any and all portions of the acupuncture treatment are performed by the person so licensed and no surrogate is authorized in this state to serve in his or her stead. The practice of acupuncture should follow the same quality of standard that the physician, or any other physician in his or her community, would render in delivering any other medical treatment. "

Conclusion

Currently Physical Therapists around the United States have chosen to use the phrases “Dry Needling”, “Intramuscular Therapy” or “Trigger Point Therapy” which the Council defines as Acupuncture in Mississippi. Mississippi Code states that only a physician or a Licensed Acupuncturist can perform acupuncture. Physical Therapists are not qualified by Mississippi Code to perform Acupuncture. The Scope of Practice change defines educational standards of 50 hours, which is far below the educational requirements for Medical Doctors, and can in no way compare to the educational and clinical requirements for Acupuncturists. The public is at great risk if Physical Therapists are allowed to practice acupuncture as described in the recent Scope Change that was effective September 10, 2012.

It is the Official Position of the Mississippi Council of Advisors in Acupuncture that anyone performing the act of inserting and manipulating a needle in the body is practicing Acupuncture in Mississippi. Physical Therapists performing Acupuncture, Dry Needling or Trigger Point Therapy are in Violation of the Mississippi Acupuncture Practice Act.



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