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ADVISORY NOTICE

Occupational Therapy Scope of Practice Dry Needling

The provision of Dry Needling IS NOT authorized as being within the Scope of Practice of Occupational Therapy in Nevada.

The Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau, in response to an inquiry by Senator Parks, regarding whether dry needling was within the scope of practice of physical therapy, issued an opinion regarding dry needling in the State of Nevada. Pertinent sections of that opinion reads in part:

“After thoroughly examining all the relevant statutory provisions in NRS Title 54, and after interpreting those statutory provisions in a manner that best promotes the protective public policy of NRS Title 54 and best carries out the intent of the Legislature to safeguard the public from potential societal harms, we believe that the practice of dry needling is a healing art encompassed within the scope of practice of: (1) physicians practicing medicine under NRS Chapter 630; (2) osteopathic physicians practicing osteopathic medicine under NRS Chapter 633; (3) homeopathic physicians practicing neural therapy under NRS Chapter 630A; and (4) doctors of Oriental medicine practicing acupuncture under NRS Chapter 634A.”

“In order for licensed physical therapists to practice dry needling in Nevada, it is the opinion of this office that the Legislature would need to change Nevada's existing laws by enacting clear statutory authority allowing licensed physical therapists to practice dry needling in Nevada.”

At the 2019 Legislative Session, the Nevada Legislature passed SB 186 which created clear statutory authority for Physical Therapists and Athletic Trainers to perform dry needling with the appropriate training as established through regulation.

Occupational Therapists are NOT authorized to perform dry needling until such time as statutory authority is granted by the Nevada Legislature.

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