

**Dry Needling Amendments**  
2025 GENERAL SESSION  
STATE OF UTAH  
**Chief Sponsor: Paul A. Cutler**

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**

This bill provides requirements for dry needling by a physical therapist or an occupational therapist.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This bill:

- moves the registration requirement for a physical therapist using dry needling from an exception to unlawful and unprofessional conduct to a requirement for licensing;
- expands the definition of both physical therapy and occupational therapy to include dry needling;
- clarifies that no referral is needed for physical therapy or occupational therapy;
- creates a registration requirement for an occupational therapist to engage in dry needling;
- removes the restriction prohibiting occupational therapists from engaging in the practice of mental health therapy; and
- makes technical changes.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

None

**Other Special Clauses:**

None

**Utah Code Sections Affected:**

AMENDS:

**58-24b-102**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapter 507

**58-42a-102**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapter 507

**58-42a-301**, as enacted by Laws of Utah 1994, Chapter 240

ENACTS:

**58-24b-306**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

**58-24b-307**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

**58-42a-307**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

**58-42a-308**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

32 REPEALS:

33 **58-24b-505**, as enacted by Laws of Utah 2014, Chapter 354

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35 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

36 Section 1. Section **58-24b-102** is amended to read:

37 **58-24b-102 . Definitions.**

38 As used in this chapter:

- 39 (1) "Animal physical therapy" means practicing physical therapy or physiotherapy on an  
40 animal.
- 41 (2) "Board" means the Physical Therapies Licensing Board, created in Section 58-24b-201.
- 42 (3) "Consultation by telecommunication" means the provision of expert or professional  
43 advice by a physical therapist who is licensed outside of Utah to a licensed physical  
44 therapist or a health care provider by telecommunication or electronic communication.
- 45 (4) "General supervision" means supervision and oversight of [~~a person~~] an individual by a  
46 licensed physical therapist when the licensed physical therapist is immediately available  
47 in person, by telephone, or by electronic communication to assist the [~~person~~] individual.
- 48 (5) "Licensed physical therapist" means [~~a person~~] an individual licensed under this chapter  
49 to engage in the practice of physical therapy.
- 50 (6) "Licensed physical therapist assistant" means [~~a person~~] an individual licensed under this  
51 chapter to engage in the practice of physical therapy, subject to the provisions of  
52 Subsection 58-24b-401(2)(a).
- 53 (7) "Licensing examination" means a nationally recognized physical therapy examination  
54 that is approved by the division, in consultation with the board.
- 55 (8) "On-site supervision" means supervision and oversight of [~~a person~~] an individual by a  
56 licensed physical therapist or a licensed physical therapist assistant when the licensed  
57 physical therapist or licensed physical therapist assistant is:  
58 (a) continuously present at the facility where the [~~person~~] individual is providing services;  
59 (b) immediately available to assist the [~~person~~] individual; and  
60 (c) regularly involved in the services being provided by the [~~person~~] individual.
- 61 (9) "Physical impairment" means:  
62 (a) a mechanical impairment;  
63 (b) a physiological impairment;  
64 (c) a developmental impairment;  
65 (d) a functional limitation;

- 66 (e) a disability;
- 67 (f) a mobility impairment; or
- 68 (g) a bodily malfunction.
- 69 (10)(a) "Physical therapy" or "physiotherapy" means:
- 70 (i) examining, evaluating, and testing an individual who has a physical impairment or
- 71 injury;
- 72 (ii) identifying or labeling a physical impairment or injury;
- 73 (iii) formulating a therapeutic intervention plan for the treatment of a physical
- 74 impairment, injury, or pain;
- 75 (iv) assessing the ongoing effects of therapeutic intervention for the treatment of a
- 76 physical impairment or injury;
- 77 (v) treating or alleviating a physical impairment by designing, modifying, or
- 78 implementing a therapeutic intervention;
- 79 (vi) reducing the risk of an injury or physical impairment;
- 80 (vii) providing instruction on the use of physical measures, activities, or devices for
- 81 preventative and therapeutic purposes;
- 82 (viii) promoting and maintaining health and fitness;
- 83 (ix) the administration of a prescription drug pursuant to Section 58-24b-403;
- 84 (x) subject to Subsection 58-28-307(12)(b), engaging in the functions described in
- 85 Subsections (10)(a)(i) through (ix) in relation to an animal, in accordance with the
- 86 requirements of Section 58-24b-405; ~~and~~
- 87 (xi) engaging in administration, consultation, education, and research relating to the
- 88 practices described in this Subsection (10)(a)[-]; or
- 89 (xii) applying dry needling to enhance an individual's physical performance if the
- 90 physical therapy practitioner has received the necessary training as determined by
- 91 division rule in collaboration with the board.
- 92 (b) "Physical therapy" or "physiotherapy" does not include:
- 93 (i) diagnosing disease;
- 94 (ii) performing surgery;
- 95 (iii) performing acupuncture;
- 96 (iv) taking x-rays; or
- 97 (v) prescribing or dispensing a drug, as defined in Section 58-37-2.
- 98 (11) "Physical therapy aide" means ~~[a person]~~ an individual who:
- 99 (a) is trained, on-the-job, by a licensed physical therapist; and

100 (b) provides routine assistance to a licensed physical therapist or licensed physical  
101 therapist assistant, while the licensed physical therapist or licensed physical therapist  
102 assistant practices physical therapy, within the scope of the licensed physical  
103 therapist's or licensed physical therapist assistant's license.

104 (12) "Recognized accreditation agency" means an accreditation agency that:

105 (a) grants accreditation, nationally, in the United States of America; and

106 (b) is approved by the division, in consultation with the board.

107 (13)(a) "Testing" means a standard method or technique used to gather data regarding a  
108 patient that is generally and nationally accepted by physical therapists for the practice  
109 of physical therapy.

110 (b) "Testing" includes measurement or evaluation of:

111 (i) muscle strength, force, endurance, or tone;

112 (ii) cardiovascular fitness;

113 (iii) physical work capacity;

114 (iv) joint motion, mobility, or stability;

115 (v) reflexes or autonomic reactions;

116 (vi) movement skill or accuracy;

117 (vii) sensation;

118 (viii) perception;

119 (ix) peripheral nerve integrity;

120 (x) locomotor skills, stability, and endurance;

121 (xi) the fit, function, and comfort of prosthetic, orthotic, or other assistive devices;

122 (xii) posture;

123 (xiii) body mechanics;

124 (xiv) limb length, circumference, and volume;

125 (xv) thoracic excursion and breathing patterns;

126 (xvi) activities of daily living related to physical movement and mobility;

127 (xvii) functioning in the physical environment at home or work, as it relates to  
128 physical movement and mobility; and

129 (xviii) neural muscular responses.

130 (14)(a) "Trigger point dry needling" means the stimulation of a trigger point using a dry  
131 needle to treat neuromuscular pain and functional movement deficits.

132 (b) "Trigger point dry needling" does not include the stimulation of auricular or distal  
133 points.

- 134 (15) "Therapeutic intervention" includes:
- 135 (a) therapeutic exercise, with or without the use of a device;
- 136 (b) functional training in self-care, as it relates to physical movement and mobility;
- 137 (c) community or work integration, as it relates to physical movement and mobility;
- 138 (d) manual therapy, including:
- 139 (i) soft tissue mobilization;
- 140 (ii) therapeutic massage; or
- 141 (iii) joint mobilization, as defined by the division, by rule;
- 142 (e) prescribing, applying, or fabricating an assistive, adaptive, orthotic, prosthetic,
- 143 protective, or supportive device;
- 144 (f) airway clearance techniques, including postural drainage;
- 145 (g) integumentary protection and repair techniques;
- 146 (h) wound debridement, cleansing, and dressing;
- 147 (i) the application of a physical agent, including:
- 148 (i) light;
- 149 (ii) heat;
- 150 (iii) cold;
- 151 (iv) water;
- 152 (v) air;
- 153 (vi) sound;
- 154 (vii) compression;
- 155 (viii) electricity; and
- 156 (ix) electromagnetic radiation;
- 157 (j) mechanical or electrotherapeutic modalities;
- 158 (k) positioning;
- 159 (l) instructing or training a patient in locomotion or other functional activities, with or
- 160 without an assistive device;
- 161 (m) manual or mechanical traction;
- 162 (n) correction of posture, body mechanics, or gait; and
- 163 (o) trigger point dry needling, under the conditions described in Section 58-24b-505.

164 Section 2. Section **58-24b-306** is enacted to read:

165 **58-24b-306 . Trigger point dry needling -- Experience required -- Registration.**

- 166 (1) A physical therapist may practice trigger point dry needling if the physical therapist:
- 167 (a) has held a license to practice physical therapy under this chapter, and has actively

- 168           practiced physical therapy, for two years;
- 169           **(b) has successfully completed a course in trigger point dry needling that is:**
- 170               **(i) approved by the division; and**
- 171               **(ii) at least 304 total course hours, including at a minimum of:**
- 172                       **(A) 54 hours of in-person instruction; and**
- 173                       **(B) 250 supervised patient treatment sessions;**
- 174           **(c) files a certificate of completion of the course described in Subsection (1)(b) with the**
- 175               **division;**
- 176           **(d) registers with the division as a trigger point dry needling practitioner; and**
- 177           **(e) meets any other requirement to practice trigger point dry needling established by the**
- 178               **division.**
- 179           **(2) The division shall make rules, in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah**
- 180               **Administrative Rulemaking Act, that establish:**
- 181               **(a) the criteria for approving a course described in Subsection (1)(b); and**
- 182               **(b) the requirements described in Subsection (1)(e).**
- 183           **(3) The division may charge, in accordance with Section 63J-1-504, a fee for the**
- 184               **registration described in Subsection (1)(d).**

185           Section 3. Section **58-24b-307** is enacted to read:

186               **58-24b-307 . No referral required for physical therapy.**

187           A physical therapist may evaluate, initiate, and provide physical therapy treatment for a

188           client without a referral from another health service provider.

189           Section 4. Section **58-42a-102** is amended to read:

190               **58-42a-102 . Definitions.**

191           ~~[In addition to the definitions in Section 58-1-102, as]~~ As used in this chapter:

192           (1) "Board" means the Physical Therapies Licensing Board created in Section 58-24b-201.

193           (2)(a) "Individual treatment plan" means a written record composed for each client by [  
194           a person] the individual licensed under this chapter to engage in the practice of  
195           occupational therapy.

196           (b) "Individual treatment plan" includes:

197               (i) planning and directing specific exercises and programs to improve sensory  
198               integration and motor functioning at the level of performance neurologically  
199               appropriate for the individual's stage of development;

200               (ii) establishing a program of instruction to teach a client skills, behaviors, and  
201               attitudes necessary for the client's independent productive, emotional, and social

- 202 functioning;
- 203 (iii) analyzing, selecting, and adapting functional exercises to achieve and maintain  
204 the client's optimal functioning in activities of daily living and to prevent further  
205 disability; and
- 206 (iv) planning and directing specific programs to evaluate and enhance perceptual,  
207 motor, and cognitive skills.
- 208 (3) "Occupational therapist" means [~~a person~~] an individual licensed under this chapter to  
209 practice occupational therapy.
- 210 (4) "Occupational therapy aide" means [~~a person~~] an individual who is not licensed under  
211 this chapter but who provides supportive services under the supervision of an  
212 occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant.
- 213 (5) "Occupational therapy assistant" means [~~a person~~] an individual licensed under this  
214 chapter to practice occupational therapy under the supervision of an occupational  
215 therapist as described in Sections 58-42a-305 and 58-42a-306.
- 216 (6)(a) "Practice of occupational therapy" means the therapeutic use of everyday life  
217 activities with an individual:
- 218 (i) that has or is at risk of developing an illness, injury, disease, disorder, condition,  
219 impairment, disability, activity limitation, or participation restriction; and
- 220 (ii) to develop or restore the individual's ability to engage in everyday life activities  
221 by addressing physical, cognitive, mental health, psychosocial, sensory, or other  
222 aspects of the individual's performance.
- 223 (b) "Practice of occupational therapy" includes:
- 224 (i) establishing, remediating, or restoring an undeveloped or impaired skill or ability  
225 of an individual;
- 226 (ii) modifying or adapting an activity or environment to enhance an individual's  
227 performance;
- 228 (iii) maintaining and improving an individual's capabilities to avoid declining  
229 performance in everyday life activities;
- 230 (iv) promoting health and wellness to develop or improve an individual's  
231 performance in everyday life activities;
- 232 (v) performance-barrier prevention for an individual, including disability prevention;
- 233 (vi) evaluating factors that affect an individual's activities of daily living in  
234 educational, work, play, leisure, and social situations, including:
- 235 (A) body functions and structures;

- 236 (B) habits, routines, roles, and behavioral patterns;
- 237 (C) cultural, physical, environmental, social, virtual, and spiritual contexts and
- 238 activity demands that affect performance; and
- 239 (D) motor, process, communication, interaction, and other performance skills;
- 240 (vii) providing interventions and procedures to promote or enhance an individual's
- 241 safety and performance in activities of daily living in educational, work, and
- 242 social situations, including:
- 243 (A) the therapeutic use of occupations and exercises;
- 244 (B) training in self-care, self-management, home-management, and community
- 245 and work reintegration;
- 246 (C) the development, remediation, or compensation of behavioral skills and
- 247 physical, cognitive, neuromuscular, and sensory functions;
- 248 (D) the education and training of an individual's family members and caregivers;
- 249 (E) care coordination, case management, and transition services;
- 250 (F) providing consulting services to groups, programs, organizations, or
- 251 communities,
- 252 (G) modifying the environment and adapting processes, including the application
- 253 of ergonomic principles;
- 254 (H) assessing, designing, fabricating, applying, fitting, and providing training in
- 255 assistive technology, adaptive devices, orthotic devices, and prosthetic devices;
- 256 (I) assessing, recommending, and training an individual in techniques to enhance
- 257 functional mobility, including wheelchair management;
- 258 (J) driver rehabilitation and community mobility;
- 259 (K) enhancing eating and feeding performance; [~~and~~]
- 260 (L) applying physical agent modalities, managing wound care, dry needling, and
- 261 using manual therapy techniques to enhance an individual's performance skills,
- 262 if the occupational therapist has received the necessary training as determined
- 263 by division rule in collaboration with the board[-]; or
- 264 (M) applying dry needling to enhance an individual's occupational performance if
- 265 the occupational therapy practitioner has received the necessary training as
- 266 determined by division rule in collaboration with the board.
- 267 (7) "Unlawful conduct" means the same as that term is defined in Sections 58-1-501 and
- 268 58-42a-501.
- 269 (8) "Unprofessional conduct" means the same as that term is defined in Sections 58-1-501



270 and 58-42a-502.

271 Section 5. Section **58-42a-301** is amended to read:

272 **58-42a-301 . Licensure required -- License classification.**

273 (1) A license is required to engage in the practice of occupational therapy, except as  
274 specifically provided in Section 58-1-307 or 58-42a-304.

275 (2) The division shall issue to ~~[a person]~~ an individual who qualifies under this chapter a  
276 license in the classification of:

277 (a) occupational therapist; or

278 (b) occupational therapy assistant.

279 ~~[(3) Nothing in this chapter shall permit an individual licensed under this chapter to engage  
280 in the practice of mental health therapy.]~~

281 Section 6. Section **58-42a-307** is enacted to read:

282 **58-42a-307 . Trigger point dry needling -- Experience required -- Registration.**

283 (1) An occupational therapist may practice trigger point dry needling if the occupational  
284 therapist:

285 (a) has held a license to practice occupational therapy under this chapter, and has  
286 actively practiced occupational therapy, for two years;

287 (b) has successfully completed a course in trigger point dry needling that is:

288 (i) approved by the division; and

289 (ii) at least 304 total course hours, including a minimum of:

290 (A) 54 hours of in-person instruction; and

291 (B) 250 supervised patient treatment sessions;

292 (c) files a certificate of completion of the course described in Subsection (1)(b) with the  
293 division;

294 (d) registers with the division as a trigger point dry needling practitioner; and

295 (e) meets any other requirement to practice trigger point dry needling established by the  
296 division.

297 (2) The division shall make rules, in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah  
298 Administrative Rulemaking Act, that establish:

299 (a) the criteria for approving a course described in Subsection (1)(b); and

300 (b) the requirements described in Subsection (1)(e).

301 (3) The division may charge, in accordance with Section 63J-1-504, a fee for the  
302 registration described in Subsection (1)(d).

303 Section 7. Section **58-42a-308** is enacted to read:

304 **58-42a-308 . No referral required for occupational therapy.**

305 (1) An occupational therapist may evaluate, initiate, and provide occupational therapy  
306 treatment for a client without a referral from another health service provider.

307 Section 8. **Repealer.**

308 This bill repeals:

309 Section **58-24b-505, Trigger point dry needling -- Experience required -- Registration.**

310 Section 9. **Effective date.**

311 This bill takes effect on May 7, 2025.