

# **SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF MEDICAL AND OSTEOPATHIC EXAMINERS**

## **ADVISORY OPINION** **DECEMBER 8, 2010**

### **DRY NEEDLING**

#### **Question:**

Does the procedure known as “dry needling” fall within the scope of practice for physical therapists licensed in South Dakota?

#### **Findings:**

Dry needling is an invasive procedure wherein a solid needle of varying lengths is inserted through the skin and into muscle in various areas of the body.

Complications resulting from this procedure range from minor bleeding or soreness to pneumothorax.

Training in the procedure known as dry needling is obtained through attendance at a weekend seminar followed by a physical therapist’s unsupervised completion of 200 dry needling sessions on actual patients in their states of origin.

The knowledge and training to perform the procedure known as dry needling is not incorporated within any accredited physical therapy educational programs in the United States or Canada.

The South Dakota Board of Medical and Osteopathic Examiners considers procedures involving the breaking or altering of human tissue for diagnostic, palliative or therapeutic medical purposes to be the practice of medicine.

The Board determines that dry needling is significantly different from "electromyography (EMG)", which the Board previously opined was an activity within the scope of practice for a physical therapist.

#### **Decision:**

The South Dakota Board of Medical and Osteopathic Examiners determined that the procedure known as “dry needling” does not fall within the physical therapist scope of practice as defined in SDCL ch. 36-10.

*This opinion issued by the Board of Medical and Osteopathic Examiners is advisory in nature. It does not constitute an administrative rule or regulation and is intended solely to serve as a guideline for persons registered, licensed, or otherwise regulated by the Board of Medical and Osteopathic Examiners.*