

Health Care Inc. Northwest

Acupuncturists win 'dry needling' case at Oregon appeals court

In a court case pitting chiropractors against acupuncturists, the acupuncturists won.

The Oregon Court of Appeals ruled “dry needling” is acupuncture and not within the scope of practice of chiropractic medicine, the Oregon Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine said in a news release. The association won its 3-year-old “scope of practice” lawsuit against the Oregon Board of Chiropractic Examiners.

So-called dry needling involves the insertion of solid, stainless steel needles into specific points on the body for therapy of muscle pain.

The court overturned the chiropractors’ rule allowing chiropractic physicians to perform dry needling after 24 hours of training. The decision allows only “appropriately licensed and trained practitioners to provide acupuncture care to patients,” the association said.

“Dry needling is acupuncture and should be regulated and licensed according to Oregon’s existing practice act,” said Beth Howlett, the acupuncture association president. “Licensed acupuncturists are required to obtain over 700 hours of supervised training. This ruling ensures patient safety for all who receive acupuncture in Oregon.”

Howlett’s organization represents 1,200 licensed acupuncturists.