



# RULE-MAKING ORDER PERMANENT RULE ONLY

## CR-103P (December 2017) (Implements RCW 34.05.360)

CODE REVISER USE ONLY

OFFICE OF THE CODE REVISER  
STATE OF WASHINGTON  
FILED

DATE: May 22, 2024

TIME: 11:43 AM

WSR 24-11-160

**Agency:** Department of Health and Board of Physical Therapy

**Effective date of rule:**

**Permanent Rules**

31 days after filing.

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (If less than 31 days after filing, a specific finding under RCW 34.05.380(3) is required and should be stated below)

**Any other findings required by other provisions of law as precondition to adoption or effectiveness of rule?**

Yes  No If Yes, explain:

**Purpose:** Physical Therapists intramuscular needling requirements. The Board of Physical Therapy (board) and the Department of Health (department) are adopting amendments to chapter 246-915 WAC, Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist Assistants, to clarify statutory requirements included in Second Substitute House Bill (2SHB) 1039 (chapter 198, Laws of 2023) for obtaining an intramuscular needling endorsement. 2SHB 1039 expands the scope of practice of physical therapists to perform intramuscular needling, also known as dry needling, pending the issuance of an intramuscular needling endorsement.

The board and the department are adopting a new section, WAC 246-915-390, to provide an overview of the requirements and process for applying for an intramuscular needling endorsement. The new section expands upon and clarifies the education and training requirements included in 2SHB 1039, creates a process for physical therapists to apply for the endorsement, and updates definitions related to the endorsement. The board and the department are also adopting amendments to WAC 246-915-990 to establish a fee to cover the cost of the endorsement. The adopted rules clarify and set standards to ensure that physical therapists who are seeking the endorsement are prepared with the skills and education needed to provide safe intramuscular needling services to the public.

**Citation of rules affected by this order:**

New: WAC 246-915-390

Repealed: None.

Amended: WAC 246-915-990

Suspended: None.

**Statutory authority for adoption:** RCW 18.74.023, 43.70.110, 43.70.250, and 43.70.280

**Other authority:** RCW 18.74.200

**PERMANENT RULE (Including Expedited Rule Making)**

Adopted under notice filed as WSR 24-06-067 on March 4, 2024.

Describe any changes other than editing from proposed to adopted version: None.

If a preliminary cost-benefit analysis was prepared under RCW 34.05.328, a final cost-benefit analysis is available by contacting:

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Other:

**Note: If any category is left blank, it will be calculated as zero.  
No descriptive text.**

**Count by whole WAC sections only, from the WAC number through the history note.  
A section may be counted in more than one category.**

**The number of sections adopted in order to comply with:**

Federal statute:	New	<u>0</u>	Amended	<u>0</u>	Repealed	<u>0</u>
Federal rules or standards:	New	<u>0</u>	Amended	<u>0</u>	Repealed	<u>0</u>
Recently enacted state statutes:	New	<u>1</u>	Amended	<u>1</u>	Repealed	<u>0</u>

**The number of sections adopted at the request of a nongovernmental entity:**

New	<u>0</u>	Amended	<u>0</u>	Repealed	<u>0</u>
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**The number of sections adopted on the agency's own initiative:**

New	<u>1</u>	Amended	<u>1</u>	Repealed	<u>0</u>
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**The number of sections adopted in order to clarify, streamline, or reform agency procedures:**

New	<u>0</u>	Amended	<u>0</u>	Repealed	<u>0</u>
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**The number of sections adopted using:**

Negotiated rule making:	New	<u>0</u>	Amended	<u>0</u>	Repealed	<u>0</u>
Pilot rule making:	New	<u>0</u>	Amended	<u>0</u>	Repealed	<u>0</u>
Other alternative rule making:	New	<u>1</u>	Amended	<u>1</u>	Repealed	<u>0</u>

**Date Adopted:** May 21, 2024

**Name:** Kathryn Dale, PT, DSc |  
Todd Mountin, PMP for Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH

**Title:** Chair, Physical Therapy Board |  
Deputy Chief of Policy for Secretary of Health

**Signature:**



NEW SECTION

**WAC 246-915-390 Intramuscular needling—Endorsement.** (1) "Intramuscular needling" also known as "dry needling" is defined under RCW 18.74.010.

(2) As established in RCW 18.74.200 a physical therapist may perform intramuscular needling, also known as dry needling after being issued an intramuscular needling endorsement by the secretary.

(3) The secretary, upon approval by the board, shall issue an endorsement to a physical therapist who has at least one year of post-graduate practice experience that averages at least 36 hours a week and consists of direct patient care and who provides evidence in a manner acceptable to the board of a total of 325 hours of instruction and clinical experience that meet or exceed the following criteria:

(a) A total of 100 hours of didactic instruction in the following areas:

(i) Anatomy and physiology of the musculoskeletal and neuromuscular systems;

(ii) Anatomical basis of pain mechanisms, chronic pain, and referred pain;

(iii) Trigger point evaluation and management;

(iv) Universal precautions in avoiding contact with a patient's bodily fluids; and

(v) Preparedness and response to unexpected events including, but not limited to, injury to blood vessels, nerves, and organs, and psychological effects or complications.

(b) A total of 75 hours of in-person intramuscular needling instruction in the following areas:

(i) Intramuscular needling technique;

(ii) Intramuscular needling indications and contraindications;

(iii) Documentation and informed consent for intramuscular needling;

(iv) Management of adverse effects;

(v) Practical psychomotor competency; and

(vi) Occupational safety and health administration's bloodborne pathogens protocol.

(c) A successful clinical review of a minimum of 150 hours of at least 150 individual intramuscular needling treatment sessions by a qualified provider. After receiving 100 hours of didactic instruction and 75 hours of in-person intramuscular needling instruction, a physical therapist seeking endorsement has up to 18 months to complete a minimum of 150 treatment sessions for review.

(4) A physical therapist may not delegate intramuscular needling and must remain in constant attendance of the patient for the entirety of the procedure.

(5) A physical therapist can apply for endorsement before they have one year of clinical practice experience if they can meet the requirement of 100 hours of didactic instruction and 75 hours of in-person intramuscular needling instruction through their prelicensure coursework and have completed all other applicable requirements.

(6) For the purpose of subsection (3)(c) of this section, "clinical review" may include:

(a) The direct or indirect supervision of intramuscular needling treatment sessions by a qualified provider.

- (b) Review of chart notes from intramuscular needling treatment sessions by a qualified provider.
- (c) Oversight by a qualified provider of intramuscular needling treatment sessions completed through an internship or apprenticeship.
- (7) For the purpose of subsections (3)(c) and (6) of this section, a qualified provider is one of the following:
  - (a) A physician licensed under chapter 18.71 RCW; an osteopathic physician licensed under chapter 18.57 RCW; a licensed naturopath under chapter 18.36A RCW; a licensed acupuncture and Eastern medicine practitioner under chapter 18.06 RCW; or a licensed advanced registered nurse practitioner under chapter 18.79 RCW;
  - (b) A physical therapist credentialed to perform intramuscular needling in any branch of the United States armed forces;
  - (c) A licensed physical therapist who currently holds an intramuscular needling endorsement in Washington state; or
  - (d) A physical therapist licensed under the laws of another jurisdiction who meets the requirements for obtaining an intramuscular needling endorsement but does not currently hold an endorsement in Washington state.
- (8) To apply for the endorsement:
  - (a) A licensed physical therapist shall submit to the department:
    - (i) A completed endorsement application as provided by the department;
    - (ii) Endorsement fees required under WAC 246-915-990;
    - (iii) Evidence of completion of the education and training requirements listed in RCW 18.74.200; and
    - (iv) A completed affidavit demonstrating successful completion of the clinical review requirement listed in RCW 18.74.200.
  - (b) A licensed physical therapist who is credentialed to perform intramuscular needling through any branch of the military meets the requirements of the intramuscular needling endorsement and shall submit to the department:
    - (i) A completed endorsement application verifying their military credential to perform intramuscular needling; and
    - (ii) Endorsement fees required under WAC 246-915-990.
- (9) A physical therapist shall have patients receiving intramuscular needling sign an informed consent form that includes:
  - (a) The definition of intramuscular needling as set forth in RCW 18.74.010;
  - (b) A description of the risks of intramuscular needling;
  - (c) A description of the benefits of intramuscular needling;
  - (d) A description of the potential side effects of intramuscular needling; and
  - (e) A statement clearly differentiating the procedure from the practice of acupuncture. Acupuncture shall be defined in accordance with the definition of "acupuncture and Eastern medicine" under RCW 18.06.010.
- (10) Intramuscular needling may not be administered as a stand-alone treatment within a physical therapy care plan.
- (11) If a physical therapist is intending to perform intramuscular needling on a patient who the physical therapist knows is being treated by an acupuncturist or acupuncture and Eastern medicine practitioner for the same diagnosis, the physical therapist shall make reasonable efforts to coordinate patient care with the acupuncturist or acupuncture and Eastern medicine practitioner to prevent conflict or duplication of services.

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 23-07-057, filed 3/9/23, effective 6/1/23)

**WAC 246-915-990 Physical therapist fees and renewal cycle.** (1)  
Licenses must be renewed every year on the practitioner's birthday as provided in chapter 246-12 WAC.

(2) The following nonrefundable fees will be charged:

<b>Title of Fee</b>	<b>Fee</b>
<b>Original application</b>	
Application	\$80.00
<b>Active license renewal</b>	
License renewal	100.00
Late renewal penalty	50.00
Expired license reissuance	50.00
<b>Inactive license renewal</b>	
License renewal	35.00
Expired license reissuance	50.00
<b>Duplicate license</b>	10.00
<b><u>Endorsement</u></b>	
<u>Intramuscular needling endorsement</u>	<u>100.00</u>
<b>Verification of license</b>	25.00