

Practice Advice: Question of the month

Can a physiotherapist take dry needling courses before they have completed their Acupuncture training and have been rostered with the College?

The College cannot restrict the education that an individual physiotherapist plans to enroll in. However, in Manitoba, a physiotherapist must be rostered in Acupuncture before they can practice dry needling. If a physiotherapist chose to take dry needling courses before being rostered, they should consider that they will not be able to apply the knowledge gained until they have completed the rostering process. It would be challenging to maintain a skill and competence in an area without the ability to incorporate that skill into practice. If a physiotherapist finishes their Acupuncture training and then moves on to taking dry needling courses, they will be able to incorporate this skill into practice immediately, decreasing risk associated to a time lapse from gaining knowledge and skill to practicing in the area.

The requirements for the Acupuncture roster are laid out in Practice Direction on Acupuncture and Dry Needle Therapy. This practice direction refers to the practice of dry needling where it states,

“Physiotherapists wishing to offer dry needling therapy techniques must have specific instruction in this technique in addition to their basic acupuncture education and must be on the CPM Acupuncture Roster.” It is an expectation that a physiotherapist has the knowledge, skill and judgement to perform dry needling and practice within their own competence. Currently, the College does not outline specific educational requirements for dry needling practice.

Please Note: The above information pertains to physiotherapists or those practicing with a full Active license and able to use title. An Examination Candidate has conditions on their license specific to high risk acts including Acupuncture. As per Registration and Licensing Direction 3.3 [Registration On The Examination Candidate Register](#) an Examination Candidate “Must work under the supervision of a fully licensed physiotherapist **AND** Must not practice Acupuncture or Dry Needling, pelvic floor internal exam or treatment, and cervical spinal manipulations while on this register. For the purpose of this condition, the term “practice” would include any practical/ lab sessions in coursework in addition to clinical practice.” Therefore, an Examination Candidate cannot participate in a practical component of a course related to these high risks acts, and therefore must not take this education until they have moved to the full Active register.