

Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

Testimony on Bill SB 490

March 9, 2016

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

My name is Linda Beezley and I feel it is imperative to share my experience that I now can call my testimony of success. And I owe it all to the knowledgeable team of physical therapists that literally got me back on my feet. There is not a day that goes by that I don't thank them for what they did for me as it was more than a temporary treatment...they changed the way I live my life. They extended the treatment from basic therapy to incorporating these techniques into my activities of daily living.

I am 51 years old and have been a runner my entire life. I am also a Nurse Practitioner with 30 years of critical care and cardiovascular experience. I would describe myself as quite focused, driven and independent. I began running marathons 11 years ago and have averaged 2 marathons a year. I have been blessed with natural ability and have enjoyed performing well enough to qualify for the Boston Marathon many, many times. That was up until 2 years ago when I literally had to stop running due to injury. I saw my primary care physician who proceeded to prescribe physical therapy as my MRI was normal.

To be honest, I was not sold on this plan but was most desirous of returning to running. I stopped running for a couple of months thinking rest would help. No relief. I took anti-inflammatory agents daily with no relief. Needless to say, I got my eyes opened when I finally began a physical therapy plan.

I was doing physical therapy sessions twice a week for several months and although making progress, seemed to have several chronic areas that were very resistant to improving. I knew that my injuries were formed over years and years of repetitive actions and that resolve would not happen overnight. However, I was nearing utter frustration and truly believed I would never run another marathon. It was at that point I began to consider dry-needling therapy. My physical therapist had given me information about this therapy to review early in my treatment.

I did research on the dry-needling technique and felt it just might be the missing link to progression of my therapy. Additionally, being a certified nurse practitioner, I have a science-based and evidence-based philosophy about health. I needed to know everything I could about dry-needling including regulations on who performs this therapy. The more I researched, the more I became absolutely convinced that it belongs in the scope of practice for Physical Therapy and not with other disciplines of alternative medicine. I will only allow a specialist who is trained and certified to perform this technique and who has the knowledge of musculoskeletal anatomy and physiology; someone who is trained specifically in examining, evaluating and testing clients with mechanical, anatomical, and physiological impairments and limitations. Additionally, it is imperative to me that whoever is performing this technique is a discipline that is governed by a Board of Healing Arts.

Needless to say, once I began to incorporate dry-needling into my physical therapy plan of care, my progress sky-rocketed. However, it needs to be said that just performing dry-needling alone is not sufficient but that the therapy MUST be incorporated into a complete care plan of ongoing exercises and/or manual therapy. Healing a patient requires more than just a single therapy in isolation of itself. It requires ongoing patient education, understanding, teaching, and follow-up as well as ongoing assessment, evaluation and progression of the treatment plan provided by the discipline of Physical Therapy in order to promote successful outcomes.

My success story is that I have returned to running marathons. I have no doubt I could not have been able to do this without incorporating dry-needling into the plan of care detailed and outlined by my physical therapy team. And as previously stated, there is not a day that goes by that I am not reminded and thankful for their expertise that got me back to enjoying the activities of my daily living. I would trust and recommend dry-needling by a trained and certified physical therapist to any of my family or friends.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

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