

PHYSICAL THERAPY DRY NEEDLING **REPORT** 2022



RON DESANTIS
Governor

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State Surgeon General



Division of Medical
Quality Assurance

Mission



TO PROTECT, PROMOTE, AND
IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF ALL
PEOPLE IN FLORIDA THROUGH
INTEGRATED STATE, COUNTY,
AND COMMUNITY EFFORTS.

Vision

TO BE THE HEALTHIEST STATE
IN THE NATION.



Values

Innovation

We search for creative solutions and manage resources wisely.

Collaboration

We use teamwork to achieve common goals and solve problems.

Accountability

We perform with integrity and respect.

Responsiveness

We achieve our mission by serving our customers and engaging our partners.

Excellence

We promote quality outcomes through learning and continuous performance improvement.

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As required by section 486.117, Florida Statutes, the Florida Department of Health (Department) must prepare a *Physical Therapy Dry Needling Report* to be submitted to the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives on or before December 31, 2022.

“Dry needling” is a skilled intervention, based on Western Medicine, that uses filiform needles and other apparatus or equipment to stimulate a myofascial trigger point for the evaluation and management of neuromusculoskeletal conditions, movement impairments, and disabilities. “Myofascial trigger points” are an irritable section of soft tissue often associated with palpable nodules in taut bands of muscle fibers.

This report includes a summary of statutory requirements and administrative rules created for the minimal safe practice of dry needling by licensed physical therapists, the actions performed by the Board of Physical Therapy Practice (Board) to implement a new rule, and an analysis of data gathered by the Division of Medical Quality Assurance (Division) as specifically requested by the Florida Legislature.

By statute, the data included in this report must specify:

1. The number of licensed physical therapists in the state.
2. The number of licensed physical therapists in the state performing dry needling.
3. Any increases or decreases in the number of licensed physical therapists in the state by geographic area.
4. Any adverse medical incidents involving Florida licensed physical therapists performing dry needling.

The analyses and findings in this report detail mostly demographic data, including registered dry needling practitioners, as well as specifics on the steady growth of the number of licensed physical therapists across the state, and in most geographic sub-regions of the state, over the three previous fiscal years.

Creation of Florida Statute § 486.117

On June 29, 2020, Governor Ron DeSantis signed House Bill (HB) 467, creating § 486.117, Florida Statutes, which established minimum standards of practice for physical therapists performing dry needling in Florida. In April 2021, the Board of Physical Therapy Practice (Board) enacted rule 64B17-6.008, Florida Administrative Code, Minimum Standards of Practice for the Performance of Dry Needling.

The minimum standards for qualification to perform the procedure as established by § 486.117, Florida Statutes, include:

1. Requiring practitioners to complete two years of licensed practice as a physical therapist.
2. 50 hours of face-to-face continuing education related to the practice of dry needling.

Practitioners must also prove completion of either:

1. A minimum of 25 patient sessions of dry needling under the supervision of a physical therapist with the appropriate qualifications and experience to practice dry needling.
2. A minimum of 25 patient sessions of dry needling performed as a licensed physical therapist in any state or the United States Armed Forces.

To better protect Florida patients and consumers, the statute established the state's public interest in the safe practice of dry needling. Statutory and administrative guidelines were implemented with the intent to prevent, monitor, and report adverse medical incidents that may occur during treatment.

An “adverse medical incident” is defined by rule 64B17-6.008, Florida Administrative Code, as “an event over which the physical therapist could exercise control and which is associated in whole or in part with the performance of dry needling, rather than the condition for which dry needling occurred, and which resulted in any prolonged and/or emergent neurological, pulmonary, vascular, or musculoskeletal condition that required the transfer of the patient to a hospital and/or referral to a physician for treatment of the resulting condition.”



Department Implementation Efforts

Upon the approval and signing of HB 467 (2020), the Department, in conjunction with the Board, began implementation efforts and initiated the rulemaking process. Areas addressed during the implementation included educational outreach to practitioners, updating licensure applicant systems, and developing new tracking and reporting mechanisms for adverse incidents.

Effective April 19, 2021, rule 64B17-6.008, Florida Administrative Code, implemented the provisions of the newly created § 486.117, Florida Statutes, including the necessary qualifications for the practice of dry needling and the requirement of patient consent.

Supplementary guidelines include:

- 1. Specific topics to be included in continuing education materials.**
- 2. Defining key terms such as adverse medical incident, competency requirements, and supervision.**
- 3. Obligations of a qualified physical therapist supervising another practitioner during the required 25 patient sessions.**
- 4. Supervision of the procedure by telemedicine between a qualified physical therapist and a training practitioner.**
- 5. Identifying specific unqualified personnel such as physical therapy assistants whom the procedure may not be delegated to by the qualified physical therapist.**

The passage of HB 467 (2020) required the Department to update two systems used to track applicant and license information. The Licensing and Enforcement Information Database System (LEIDS), and the license verification website were updated to include the specialty designation of dry needling for physical therapists.

Additionally, the Board created and adopted the *Physical Therapy Dry Needling Attestation* form (Form #DH5057-MQA) to identify physical therapists performing dry needling in Florida. Form #DH5057-MQA became effective with the administrative rule.

Rule 64B17-6.008, Florida Administrative Code, further requires that any adverse medical incident occurring as direct result of treatment involving dry needling be reported to the Board within 15 days of the incident using the *Physical Therapy Dry Needling Adverse Medical Incident Report* form (Form #DH5053-MQA).

The adverse medical incident reporting requirement mandated the creation and addition of a new enforcement investigatory case code to the LEIDS system to track adverse incidents by the Department. Form #DH5053-MQA was incorporated by the Board and had an effective date matching that of the administrative rule.

02

DRY NEEDLING STATISTICS

Data Collection and Analysis

The Department extracted data from LEIDS annually to fulfill the report requirements, beginning in 2020. This report provides a summary of the data extracted during the reporting period, Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-20 to FY 2021-22, and includes the following:

1. **The number of physical therapists in the state.**
2. **Increases or decreases of their number by geographic region.**
3. **The number of dry needling practitioners in Florida.**
4. **The number of adverse medical incidents resulting from dry needling.**

This analysis reflects the number of physical therapist licenses issued by the Department and the number of physical therapists qualified to perform dry needling in the state of Florida. While this dataset captures the number of dry needling practitioners in FY 2020-21 and FY 2021-22, the performance of dry needling was not recorded in FY 2019-20 as this predated the authority granted by the legislation. As a result, FY 2019-20 serves as a baseline for this comparative analysis. The data captured in this analysis is also reflected geographically according to the 11 service regions of the Division.*

The Department received one report of an adverse medical incident related to the practice of dry needling during the reporting period; the Department is prohibited from publicizing complaints or allegations against health care practitioners in accordance with section 456.073, Florida Statutes, until 10 days after a determination of probable cause exists. No further analysis of adverse medical incidents was conducted or contained within this report.

**Please note that these data were extracted from a dynamic database and may be amended at a later date.*

Findings and Discussion

These data are categorized by county and service region of the Division, the details of which may be located in Appendix B of this report.

The data illustrates the growth of physical therapy licenses issued and the number of physical therapists performing dry needling in the state of Florida for each fiscal year in this reporting period.

Licensed Physical Therapists

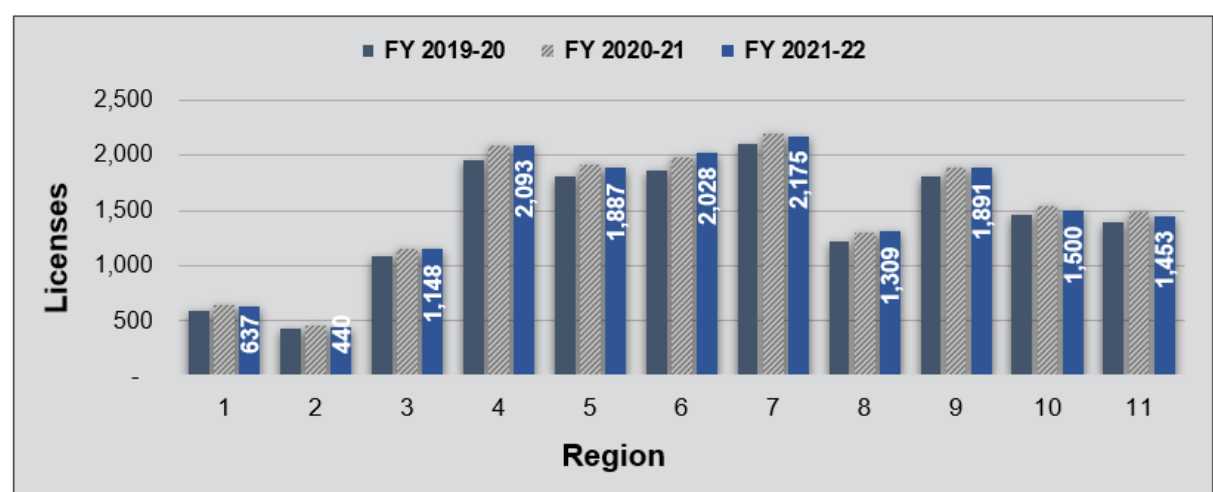
The number of physical therapists licensed in the state of Florida increased by 7.3%, growing from 19,241 in FY 2019-20 to 20,649 in FY 2021-22, as portrayed in Figure 1.*

With three years of data, a net positive pattern of growth is shown, and each of the 11 service regions experienced some degree of growth ranging from single digit to low double-digit percentages.

Region 1 and Region 6 experienced the greatest amount of growth as both expanded in the number of physical therapists licensed by over 8%. Region 2 experienced the smallest amount of growth at 1.4%.

Figure 2: Service Regions	
Region 1	Pensacola
Region 2	Tallahassee
Region 3	Gainesville
Region 4	Jacksonville
Region 5	St. Petersburg
Region 6	Tampa
Region 7	Orlando
Region 8	Ft. Myers
Region 9	West Palm Beach
Region 10	Ft. Lauderdale
Region 11	Miami

Figure 1: Physical Therapist Licenses, by Service Region, by Fiscal Year



Source: LEIDS Database

*Please note that these data were extracted from a dynamic database and may be amended at a later date.

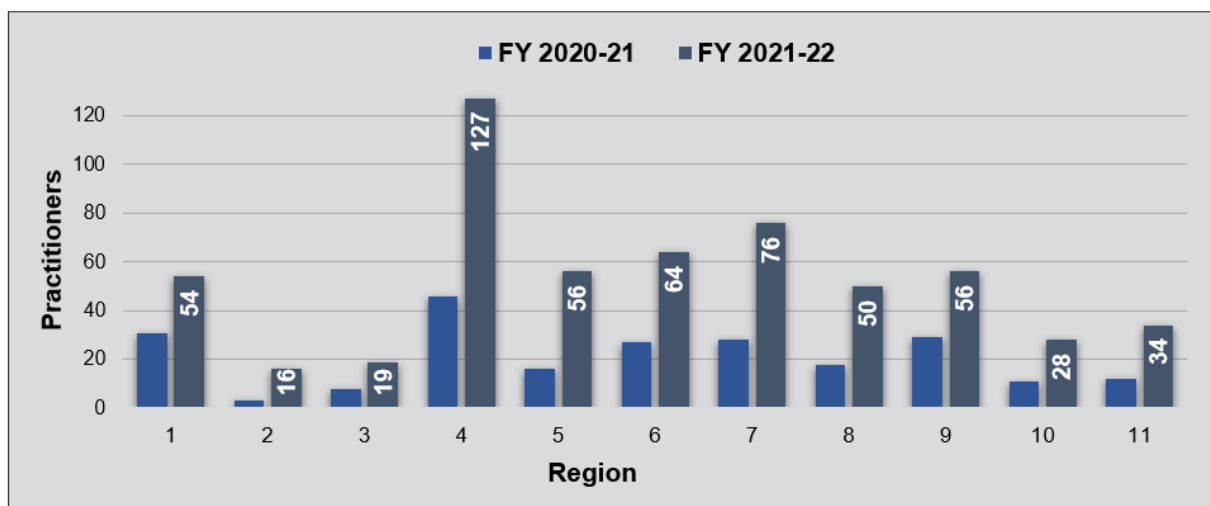
Dry Needling Practitioners

Dry needling practitioners increased significantly from FY 2020-21 to FY 2021-22 as illustrated by **Figure 3**.

The number of practitioners over the last two fiscal years increased by over 133%, growing to 247 the first year and to 576 the second year. Region 4 possesses the highest concentration of this growth, increasing from 46 practitioners to 127 practitioners from FY 2020-21 to FY 2021-22.

By comparison, Region 2 and Region 3 both experienced a high percentage of growth. However, when reviewing the actual number of practitioners, their net growth was measured by an increase from single digits to double digits, which artificially inflates the percentages.

Figure 3: Dry Needling Practitioners, by Region, by Fiscal Year



Source: LEIDS Database

**Please note that these data were extracted from a dynamic database and may be amended at a later date.*

Adverse Medical Incidents

One adverse medical incident was reported to the Department during the reporting period. No further analysis was conducted on adverse medical incidents, and thus does not appear in the data tables of Appendix B. All information and details pertaining to the incident are confidential.

APPENDIX A: Florida Board of Physical Therapy Practice Overview

Overview

The Florida Board of Physical Therapy Practice (Board) plays a leading role in the ever-changing health care environment through dialogue with the public, the state legislature, academia, and the therapeutic community.

Structure

The Division serves as the principal administrative unit for the Board which is supported by a full-time professional staff based in Tallahassee. Board activities are supported in full by fees paid by its licensees.

The Board is composed of seven members appointed by the Governor and subject to confirmation by the Senate. As Board member terms expire, the Governor appoints successors for a term of four years, and members serve until successors are appointed or resign.

Qualifications

Five Board members are licensed physical therapists in good standing in this state who are residents of Florida and who have been engaged in the practice of physical therapy for at least four years immediately before their appointment.

One licensed physical therapist Board member may be a full-time faculty member teaching a physical therapy curriculum at an educational institution in the state.

The two remaining Board members are residents of Florida who have never been licensed health care practitioners.

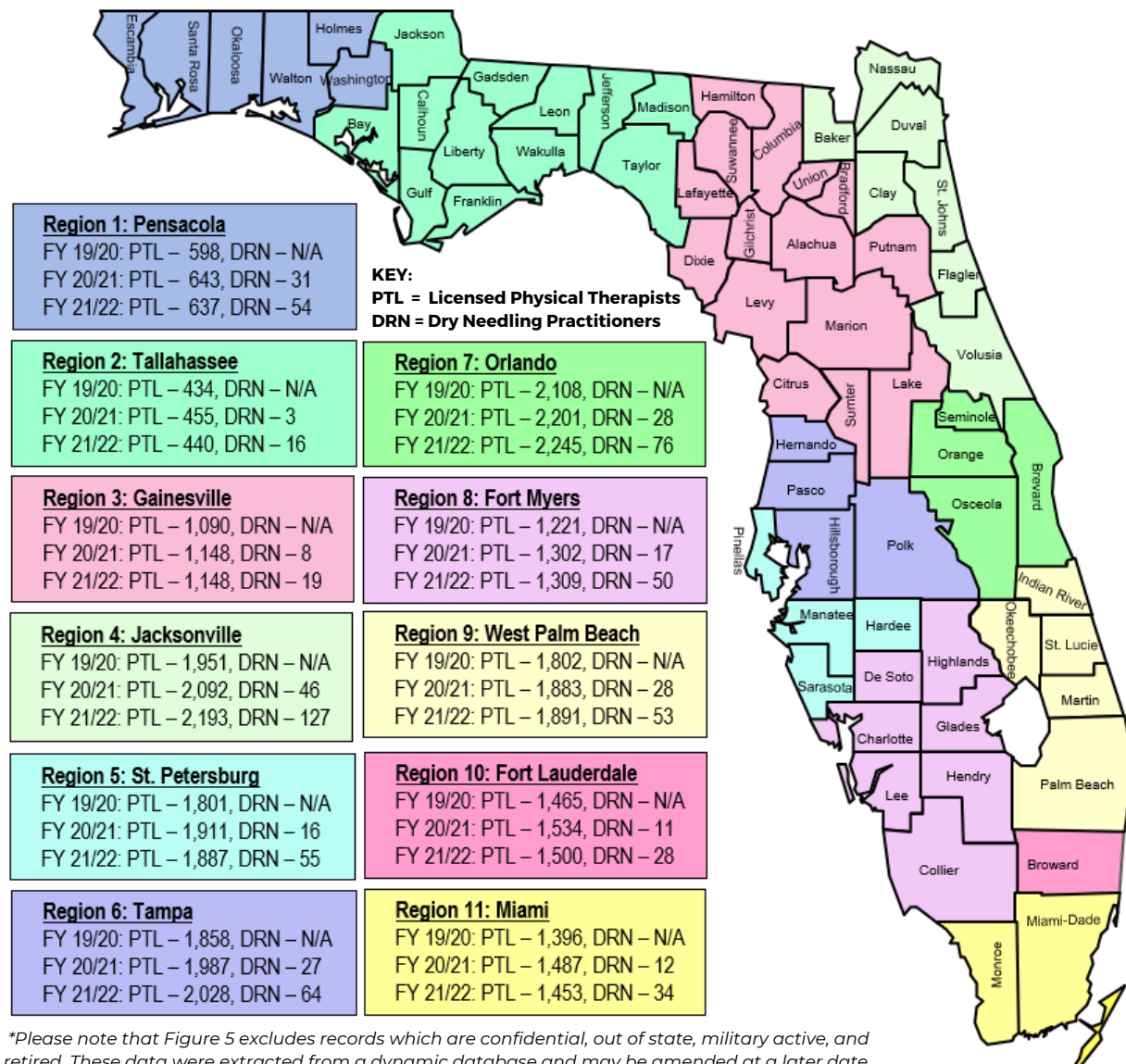
04

APPENDIX B: Data Tables

Figure 4: Total Practitioners, Rate of Change by Fiscal Year

Fiscal Year	Physical Therapist Licenses	Dry Needling Practitioners
FY 2019-20	19,241	N/A
FY 2020-21	20,326	263
Rate of Change	5.64%	N/A
FY 2021-22	20,648	611
Rate of Change	1.58%	132.32%
Total ROC	7.31%	N/A

Figure 5: Practitioners* by Service Region



*Please note that Figure 5 excludes records which are confidential, out of state, military active, and retired. These data were extracted from a dynamic database and may be amended at a later date.

Figure 6: Physical Therapist Licenses by Region and County

Region and County	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	Rate of Change
Region 0				
Confidential	15	15	15	0.0%
Out of State	3,051	3,591	3,480	14.1%
Military	84	78	71	-15.5%
Retired	377	388	521	38.2%
Region 0 Total	3,527	4,072	4,087	15.9%
Region 1				
Escambia	200	212	196	-2.0%
Holmes	4	4	4	0.0%
Okaloosa	159	169	168	5.7%
Santa Rosa	158	180	185	17.1%
Walton	61	68	75	23.0%
Washington	7	10	9	28.6%
Region 1 Total	589	643	637	8.1%
Region 2				
Bay	123	130	130	5.7%
Calhoun	3	3	2	-33.3%
Franklin	5	4	4	-20.0%
Gadsden	6	6	5	-16.7%
Gulf	9	10	6	-33.3%
Jackson	25	25	22	-12.0%
Jefferson	4	4	5	25.0%
Leon	235	249	243	3.4%
Madison	5	4	5	0.0%
Taylor	9	9	8	-11.1%
Wakulla	10	11	10	0.0%
Region 2 Total	434	455	440	1.4%
Region 3				
Alachua	418	441	423	1.2%
Bradford	2	3	4	100.0%
Citrus	97	98	96	-1.0%
Columbia	28	31	33	17.9%
Dixie	3	3	3	0.0%
Gilchrist	2	2	4	100.0%
Hamilton	2	2	3	50.0%
Lafayette	2	2	2	0.0%
Lake	215	221	236	9.8%
Levy	5	6	11	120.0%
Marion	223	239	235	5.4%
Putnam	25	27	23	-8.0%
Sumter	58	65	68	17.2%
Suwannee	9	7	6	-33.3%
Union	1	1	1	0.0%
Region 3 Total	1,090	1,148	1,148	5.3%
Region 4				

Figure 6: Physical Therapist Licenses by Region and County, Continued

Region and County	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	Rate of Change
Baker	4	5	6	50.0%
Clay	153	164	172	12.4%
Duval	798	849	828	3.8%
Flagler	72	80	94	30.6%
Nassau	55	59	60	9.1%
St. Johns	551	599	607	10.2%
Volusia	318	336	326	2.5%
Region 4 Total	1,951	2,092	2,093	7.3%
Region 5				
Hardee	3	3	2	-33.3%
Manatee	388	411	425	9.5%
Pinellas	935	993	966	3.3%
Sarasota	475	504	494	4.0%
Region 5 Total	1,801	1,911	1,887	4.8%
Region 6				
Hernando	94	97	94	0.0%
Hillsborough	1,076	1,174	1,169	8.6%
Pasco	364	383	417	14.6%
Polk	324	333	348	7.4%
Region 6 Total	1,858	1,987	2,028	9.1%
Region 7				
Brevard	507	528	511	0.8%
Orange	1,031	1,074	1,078	4.6%
Osceola	118	134	134	13.6%
Seminole	451	464	452	0.2%
Region 7 Total	2,107	2,200	2,175	3.2%
Region 8				
Charlotte	138	146	136	-1.4%
Collier	320	344	345	7.8%
DeSoto	10	10	7	-30.0%
Glades	1	1	2	100.0%
Hendry	13	13	11	-15.4%
Highlands	85	84	80	-5.9%
Lee	654	704	728	11.3%
Region 8 Total	1,221	1,302	1,309	7.2%
Region 9				
Indian River	136	143	140	2.9%
Martin	211	216	212	0.5%
Okeechobee	9	9	8	-11.1%
Palm Beach	1,292	1,350	1,361	5.3%
St. Lucie	154	165	170	10.4%
Region 9 Total	1,802	1,883	1,891	4.9%
Region 10				
Broward	1,465	1,534	1,500	2.4%
Region 10 Total	1,465	1,534	1,500	2.4%

Figure 6: Physical Therapist Licenses by Region and County, Continued

Region and County	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	Rate of Change
Region 11				
Miami-Dade	1,336	1,423	1,403	5.0%
Monroe	60	64	50	-16.7%
Region 11 Total	1,396	1,487	1,453	4.1%
Grand Total	19,241	20,326	20,648	7.3%

Source: LEIDS Database

**Please note that these data were extracted from a dynamic database and may be amended at a later date.*

Figure 7: Dry Needling Practitioners by Region and County

Region	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	ROC
Region 0			
Confidential	0	0	0.0%
Out of State	16	34	112.5%
Military	0	1	100.0%
Retired	0	0	0.0%
Region 0 Total	16	35	118.8%
Region 1			
Escambia	7	10	42.9%
Holmes	0	0	0.0%
Okaloosa	8	19	137.5%
Santa Rosa	11	18	63.6%
Walton	5	7	40.0%
Washington	0	0	0.0%
Region 1 Total	31	54	74.2%
Region 2			
Bay	1	12	1100.0%
Calhoun	0	0	0.0%
Franklin	0	0	0.0%
Gadsden	0	0	0.0%
Gulf	0	0	0.0%
Jackson	0	0	0.0%
Jefferson	0	0	0.0%
Leon	2	3	50.0%
Madison	0	1	100.0%
Taylor	0	0	0.0%
Wakulla	0	0	0.0%
Region 2 Total	3	16	433.3%
Region 3			
Alachua	4	7	75.0%
Bradford	0	0	0.0%
Citrus	0	0	0.0%
Columbia	0	0	0.0%
Dixie	0	0	0.0%
Gilchrist	0	0	0.0%
Hamilton	0	0	0.0%
Lafayette	0	0	0.0%
Lake	3	5	66.7%
Levy	0	0	0.0%
Marion	1	6	500.0%
Putnam	0	0	0.0%
Sumter	0	1	100.0%
Suwannee	0	0	0.0%
Union	0	0	0.0%
Region 3 Total	8	19	137.5%
Region 4			

Figure 7: Dry Needling Practitioners by Region and County, Continued

Region	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	ROC
Baker	0	0	0.0%
Clay	6	10	66.7%
Duval	14	44	214.3%
Flagler	2	5	150.0%
Nassau	3	7	133.3%
St. Johns	18	52	188.9%
Volusia	3	9	200.0%
Region 4 Total	46	127	176.1%
Region 5			
Hardee	0	0	0.0%
Manatee	3	11	266.7%
Pinellas	10	30	200.0%
Sarasota	3	14	366.7%
Region 5 Total	16	55	243.8%
Region 6			
Hernando	0	0	0.0%
Hillsborough	19	45	136.8%
Pasco	5	15	200.0%
Polk	3	4	33.3%
Region 6 Total	27	64	137.0%
Region 7			
Brevard	6	19	216.7%
Orange	16	40	150.0%
Osceola	1	2	100.0%
Seminole	5	15	200.0%
Region 7 Total	28	76	171.4%
Region 8			
Charlotte	2	3	50.0%
Collier	4	6	50.0%
DeSoto	0	1	100.0%
Glades	0	0	0.0%
Hendry	0	0	0.0%
Highlands	0	2	200.0%
Lee	11	38	245.5%
Region 8 Total	17	50	194.1%
Region 9			
Indian River	0	0	0.0%
Martin	2	7	250.0%
Okeechobee	0	0	0.0%
Palm Beach	24	40	66.7%
St. Lucie	2	6	200.0%
Region 9 Total	28	53	89.3%
Region 10			
Broward	11	28	154.5%
Region 10 Total	11	28	154.5%

Figure 7: Dry Needling Practitioners by Region and County, Continued

Region	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	ROC
Region 11			
Miami-Dade	10	33	230.0%
Monroe	2	1	-50.0%
Region 11 Total	12	34	183.3%
Grand Total	247	611	147.4%

Source: LEIDS Database

**Please note that these data were extracted from a dynamic database and may be amended at a later date.*

Florida Board of Physical Therapy Practice

Steve Chenoweth
PT
Board Chair

Dr. Ellen K. Donald
PT, PhD
Board Vice-Chair

Dr. Andrew Koenig
PT, DPT, MHA, OCS
Board Member

Dr. Paul Kleponis
BSEd, BSPT, DPT, LtCol (ret.)
Board Member

For more information about the Division, visit:
<https://flhealthsource.gov/>

For questions or comments, contact:

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Division of Medical
Quality Assurance