

Testimony from Dick Clark of The Portland Clinic for House Health Committee hearing on HB 2362 on Feb. 9, 2021

Good afternoon Chair Prusak and members of the committee.

My name is Dick Clark, CEO of The Portland Clinic. I am a resident of Multnomah County.

I am also one of the representatives of the Oregon Independent Medical Clinics. We are an organization of 1,250 medical providers and 5,000 employees who provide health care to more than 2 million Oregonians from Portland to Coos Bay to Bend.

The Oregon Independent Medical Clinics and the Oregon Medical Association oppose House Bill 2362.

We recognize that the sponsors of this legislation are well intentioned to help Oregonians, but we have concerns about this proposal, which may actually impede equity, access and affordability for healthcare.

Our coalition members are committed to maintaining their independence as Oregon businesses. We are not interested in being acquired by any large hospital system or private equity firm. In fact, I routinely get calls from these types of organizations and have a short response – “we are not interested.”

In order to stay independent in this competitive environment, our like-minded independent clinics talk with each other on a regular basis and seek creative collaboration that will serve our patients better, maintain access, provide quality service and keep health care costs at reasonable levels.

For example, The Oregon Clinic and The Portland Clinic are both members of the independent coalition. We partnered with Providence St. Vincent Medical last year to provide all of its general surgery services so the hospital wouldn't have to duplicate the availability of our doctors and hire its own surgeons. This saves money and is good for patients.

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Another example is a coalition of like-minded independent primary care clinics in Portland, including The Portland Clinic, NW Primary Care and South Tabor Medical Clinic. About 10 years ago, these three clinics formed an insurance contracting partnership, which has yielded excellent quality metrics for patients and affordable pricing.

A third example is a collaborative that The Portland Clinic with NW Permanente to serve an overflow of Kaiser Permanente insured patients rather than have those Oregonians have to wait extra months for service. As you know Kaiser expects high quality at affordable pricing. Through this collaboration, we have delivered on this goal for 10 years.

These partnerships are keeping with the Oregon spirit of teamwork and innovation.

However, HB 2362 with its sweeping net of capturing any collaboration will stymy and delay any efforts to create a better, more collaborative health care network.

Independent health care clinics do not have the administrative staff or financial resources to wind their way through a labyrinth of hearings and reviews in order to secure permission for good ideas.

Our independent clinics all want to collaborate to reduce health care costs and provide access and equity in our delivery systems. We look forward to continuing conversations on many initiatives in the state that will achieve these goals.

In the meantime, the State of Oregon already has enough regulations and protections to oversee the health care system. We don't need another layer like HB 2362.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.