

My name is Elissa Pirocanac. I am a cardiac anesthesiologist from Bend, OR. I am also Vice President of the Association for Independent Medicine, a national organization dedicated to helping private practice groups stay independent. Prior to moving to Bend, I worked in a private practice group in Portland, OR for 15 years. For 6 of those years, I served as Medical Director for that group. While I worked at Providence St. Vincent's ministry, I served for 3 years as the Regional OB Anesthesia Medical Director and then later as the Medical Director for St. Vincent's specifically.

I come before this committee today to share how the corporate practice of medicine has undermined care quality and access for patients. I have observed corporations enter the anesthesia world twice now in Portland, both times with disastrous consequences, including delayed and canceled surgeries, increased out-of-pocket expense for patients, and an attrition of excellent physicians out of the geographic area. The first time was about 10 years ago when Team Health took over an anesthesia contract from the private practice group in Portland. Soon after, there was a significant decrease in operating room volume as Team Health did not have the employees to staff all the locations they had promised to do. Moreover, we started hearing about the out-of-network billing practices that Team Health used on their patients. About ten years after this transition, this Portland hospital has retained a contract with the original anesthesia group.

Recently, Providence Health System has made a similar move by bringing in Sound Anesthesia, which is a group that is owned by United Health Care and a private equity firm. Since the transition to Sound, operating room volumes have decreased by at least 50%. The time I spent working at Providence was the highlight of my career. I felt like I was working with surgeons and staff that provided the highest quality of care. It is heartbreaking to read how a business decision based on seemingly false promises by a corporation has deprived patients of much-needed procedures and care. This is what happens when medicine is not practiced and managed on a local level, and when all the decisions are made by corporate managers pursuing profit above all else. Anyone who understood the local anesthesia market could have predicted this current outcome. But a corporation that has no understanding will just provide promises that they can't back up. And have no reason to back it up because there are no consequences to them. Since the transition, I know many anesthesiologists who have left the Portland metro area and the state of Oregon to practice elsewhere as they did not want to have to work and be employed by a corporation.

One of the reasons for my move to Bend was that towards the end of my time at Providence, I started getting the sense that the way I was currently practicing was not going to be sustained in the future. I made the move to Bend because I knew through reputation that the private practice anesthesiology group here was strong and had a very good relationship with the hospital system. And that has turned to be fact. However, during my time in Bend, I've watched from afar how a "business" decision has devastated patient access to care with other specialties. One of the leading "health care networks" that operates in Bend made a business/financial decision to fire half of the PAs that the orthopedic surgeons required to work in their full capacity. The surgeons had no say in this decision being made. The result led immediately to a decrease in

the amount of patients that could be seen and given the care they desired. It also eventually led to 4 of the 8 surgeons to stop practicing in Bend, because along with the lack of control these physicians had within their own practice, they were also required to follow a 1 year non compete clause that was part of their employment. Since this change, wait time for patients in the community to get seen and the surgeries they need have increased to almost a year. All because a business wanted to be more profitable.

Similar stories have happened in the gastroenterology and urology subspecialties in Bend by the same corporation due to "business" related decisions. Each time, physicians that left or were let go by the corporation had to wait out their non-compete if they wished to stay in the community, leading to significant shortages of urology and gastroenterology specialty care for the duration of the non-competes.

As a society we always talk about how we want patients to have access to the care they need and the ability to choose the physician and/or provider they want to see. The influence of corporations in the practice of medicine severely inhibits both those things. It is too easy for corporations to make the easy decision to increase profits and ignore the difficult decisions to put patients first. Please support HB 4130, which will slow the corporate takeover of medicine and restore power in health care where it belongs: with patients and their physicians.

Thank you.