

February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Hon. Senator Patterson  
Chair, Committee on Health Care

Hon. Senator Hayden  
Vice-Chair, Committee on Health Care

*Re: Support SB 951*

Dear Senators Patterson and Hayden,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB 951, a critical bill that will protect the integrity of medical practice in Oregon by ensuring that physicians—not corporate entities—retain authority over patient care decisions.

Speaking from my own experience as past President of the Oregon Urological Society, a long-standing member of the Oregon Medical Association Executive Committee, and Director of Strategic Outreach at OHSU, I have traveled across Oregon, meeting with clinic and hospital leaders. Through these conversations, I have witnessed the growing challenges private practices face in an increasingly corporatized healthcare system. While this legislation is a necessary safeguard, we must also address the financial pressures forcing practices to sell in the first place. These views are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of the organizations I am affiliated with.

Oregon has long upheld the corporate practice of medicine doctrine, ensuring that patient care remains in the hands of physicians rather than corporate executives. However, vertically integrated insurance companies and private equity firms are eroding this principle, prioritizing financial gains over patient welfare. Unlike physicians, they are not bound by an ethical obligation to prioritize patient care. Yet, they increasingly dictate treatment decisions—restricting access to medically necessary care, cutting essential support staff, and steering patients toward high-margin, low-value services.

The consequences of this shift are already playing out in our state. Optum's takeover of the Oregon Medical Group displaced physicians and disrupted patient care, leaving many scrambling for new providers. These were not medical decisions but corporate maneuvers driven by financial objectives. Since 2020, similar disruptions have occurred across the state, worsening provider shortages and patient access issues.

SB 951 does not ban private investment in healthcare or prevent medical groups from partnering with management service organizations for administrative support. What it does is reinforce a fundamental principle: physicians—not corporations—must retain control over clinical decision-making. This is essential to ensuring that patient care is based on medical expertise, evidence, and ethical responsibility, not on profit margins.

While SB 951 is a necessary step, it is only part of the solution. To truly preserve independent medical practice in Oregon, we must address the underlying pressures driving physicians to sell. Without broader reforms that make private practice sustainable, these trends will continue.

I urge your support for SB 951 as a crucial step in protecting patient-centered, physician-led care. Oregon's healthcare system depends on ensuring that medical decisions are made by those who are trained, licensed, and ethically bound to put patients first.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. Duty', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Brian Duty, MD, MBA  
Professor of Urologic Surgery