

Submitter: Maryann Panei
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB951
Dear Senator,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB 951, a critical piece of legislation that will protect the integrity of medical practice in Oregon by ensuring that physicians retain ultimate authority over decisions which impact patient care.

As a physician, I have dedicated my life to the health and well-being of my patients. I have undergone years of medical training, taken an oath to prioritize patient welfare above all else, and built a career centered on the trust my patients place in me. At the same time, I recognize that running a medical practice requires balancing financial sustainability with ethical patient care. This balance is the core of our healthcare system, preserved by the corporate practice of medicine doctrine that has existed in Oregon since 1947—a doctrine which more than 30 other states have also adopted.

Vertically integrated insurance companies and private equity firms do not always share this mission. Their primary duty is not to patients or communities but to shareholders and investors, with financial returns as their primary objective. Unlike physicians, they are not bound by an oath to prioritize patient welfare, nor do they bear the ethical responsibility of making clinical decisions in the best interests of those they serve. Instead, the profit they seek to maximize often leads them to deny medically necessary care, cut critical support staff, and push patients toward high-margin, low-value treatments. These measures not only undermine patient outcomes but also place an increasing burden on physicians and frontline healthcare workers. Without strong protections like those outlined in SB 951, these corporate entities will continue to expand their influence over medical decision-making, eroding the corporate practice of medicine doctrine and putting profits ahead of the health and well-being of our communities.

I have seen this happen to almost every private group in New Jersey over the past several years. Health care was never meant to be run as a money-making private equity corporation, it was meant to take care of patients. While I understand and agree, it has to be done within the budget, it does not need to make management

companies rich at patients and physicians expense.

We have already seen the real-world consequences of this issue unfold in Oregon. At the Oregon Medical Group, corporate restructuring abruptly severed patients from their longtime doctors, disrupting continuity of care and leaving many scrambling to find new providers in an already overburdened system. This upheaval wasn't the result of medical necessity or evidence-based decision-making—it was a business decision made by executives. When patient care becomes secondary to financial objectives, we see poorer health outcomes, increased strain on remaining providers, and a loss of trust in our healthcare system. Since 2020, this dynamic has continued to occur across the state.

This is not a radical proposal. This bill does not ban private equity investment in medicine. It does not prohibit professional medical entities from contracting with Management Services Organizations for business and administrative support. It simply ensures that physicians retain ultimate authority over clinical matters—decisions that impact patient health and safety.

SB 951 is a necessary and reasonable step to close these loopholes and restore decision-making power to those who are trained, licensed, and ethically bound to care for patients. Oregon's physicians must be empowered to make medical decisions based on science, evidence, and individual patient needs.

I urge support of SB 951 as one of many important steps to protect the integrity of our healthcare system.

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Sincerely,

Maryann Panei