

Submitter: Kenneth Rosenberg
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB951

To the Oregon Senate Health Care Committee regarding SB 951:

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 that impact patient care.

I am a retired public health physician. I worked for the Oregon Health Authority for 20 years including two years as the Public Health Division's Chief Science Officer (2016-2017). I was a member of the Oregon Pediatric Society's Board of Directors for ten years and taught epidemiology at OHSU for many years.

I have been disturbed by increasing private control over the practice of medicine since the 1960s when I first understood that pharmaceutical and insurance companies were using a variety of unethical methods to influence physician practice to increase their profits. Insurance company lobbying created the 1997 Balanced Budget Act that encouraged insurance companies to enroll Medicare recipients into Medicare Advantage programs. This led to a variety of fanciful schemes that allowed insurance companies to profit from denying medical care to sick people. The recent incursions of private equity have intensified the efforts of for-profit entities to enrich themselves at the expense of patients and physicians. 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.

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 support SB 951. I urge this committee to do the same.

Thank you.
Kenneth D. Rosenberg, MD, MPH
Portland, OR