

Submitter: Mike Huntington  
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 strongly support SB 951.

I am a retired radiation oncologist and was the medical director at the Samaritan Regional Cancer Center in Corvallis from 1984 through 2006. During that time, I worked closely with the medical oncologists at the Corvallis Clinic, a well-respected group of doctors for seven decades now. However, the Clinic endured financial setbacks in the early 1990s and eventually sold its properties to Samaritan Health Services to maintain financial viability. Further setbacks came just before and during the 2020-2022 pandemic, prompting the Clinic to consider bankruptcy or be purchased by another entity.

Despite overwhelming community opposition, as documented in testimony to the Health Care Market Oversight Agency, the Clinic allowed itself to be purchased by Optum of United Health Group. Members of our community knew about the abusive practices United Health Group and Optum have demonstrated nationwide, particularly in Oregon. They wanted nothing to do with United Health Group.

Oregon law was not strong enough to prevent what many felt was a tragic mistake by the Clinic being purchased by Optum.

The expansion of corporate influence in healthcare decision-making prioritizes profits over community health. SB 951 proposes crucial safeguards to address these concerns. By closing existing loopholes, this bill aims to return medical decision-making authority to qualified, licensed professionals who are ethically committed to patient care. Oregon's physicians must have the autonomy to make medical choices grounded in scientific evidence and tailored to individual patient requirements.

I endorse SB 951 and encourage the committee to support this necessary and reasonable legislation.

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