

Submitter: Torree McGowan  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB951

I am an emergency physician serving the central Oregon community for over 10 years, and prior to that, I served in the US Air Force as a physician for over a decade. I have watched as private equity and the corporate practice of medicine has dismantled our healthcare system over the past decade, putting profits before people and making it harder and more expensive to access care for patients.

As an emergency physician, I can stabilize someone with a life threatening emergency, but I rely on my colleagues who are specialists to help provide life saving care to patients. In the past five years in central Oregon, we have seen our orthopedic and neurosurgery colleagues decimated by the corporate practice of medicine and our patients are the victims. Desert Orthopedics was purchased by Praxis Healthcare. Within a few years, the corporate playbook of buy a thriving practice, sell the real estate and then make them rent it back, saddle them with debt, and then close the practice played out just as expected. In a wealthy resort town, one of the main orthopedic offices closed because private equity destroyed them. This left thousands of patients without care, and The Center for Orthopedics struggled to fill the gaps. That proved to be too large an ask, and The Center is now having to partner with a local health system, rather than being an independent small business as they had been for decades.

The central Oregon community is struggling to find surgeons to cover call, and when we have emergencies like bleeding in the brain, we often have to transfer patients to Portland because we don't have the necessary surgeons to perform these time sensitive and life saving surgeries. Imagine being told that your loved one has dangerous bleeding in the brain and needs surgery, but we can't find anyone because someone sold the practice so they could line their shareholder pockets.

This is one small example that has occurred in the past five years in central Oregon, and is still evolving today. However, this same story is playing out in all specialties in medicine all across the country. Major medical societies all strongly oppose the corporate practice of medicine because it hurts patients.

You'll notice something interesting, if you read the testimony of physicians. None of us are talking about profits or making money. We are talking about something much more important - your life, and the lives of your loved ones. Don't sell our health to maximize someone else's stock portfolio.