



March 4, 2025

To: Chair Patterson
Vice Chair Hayden
Senator Campos
Senator Linthicum
Senator Reynolds

Fr: Matt Swanson, SEIU Oregon State Council

Re: Support for SB 951

My name is Matt Swanson, and I write to you representing the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), an organization of 85,000 working Oregonians. Our mission is to improve the standard of living for our members, their families, and communities while striving for a more just society.

We are happy to provide support for Senate Bill 951 behalf of healthcare workers, and patients across Oregon who are deeply concerned about the growing influence of private equity and corporate ownership in healthcare. SB 951 is a critical piece of legislation that will protect the integrity of medical practice in Oregon by ensuring that physicians retain ultimate authority over medical decisions.

For decades, Oregon has upheld the Corporate Practice of Medicine doctrine, which safeguards physician autonomy and ensures that medical decisions are made based on a provider's professional responsibility and the needs of patients—not corporate financial goals. However, studies have shown that takeovers of physician practices are increasingly encroaching on these protections, prioritizing short-term profits over long-term patient care.

The Dangers of Corporate Interference in Healthcare

Unlike the providers we represent, private equity firms do not have the same responsibilities to protect patients rather, their duty is to shareholders and investors. Their business model relies on acquiring healthcare facilities, cutting costs, and maximizing short-term returns. The consequences are dire:

- **Staffing cuts and reduced patient safety** – A Harvard Medical School and University of Chicago study found that, within three years of a private equity acquisition, patient falls increased by 27%, and bloodstream infections rose by 38% due to reductions in staffing.¹
- **Higher costs for patients and workers** – LifePoint Health, a private equity-backed firm operating in Oregon, slashed employee salaries, cut charity care by 21%, and was found in violation of patient safety laws, leading to an “immediate jeopardy” designation by regulators in North Carolina.²

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¹ modernhealthcare.com/safety-quality/private-equity-patient-safety-hospitals-sneha-kannan

² [PESP Report Apollo Lifepoint 2024.pdf](#)

- **Erosion of physician and worker autonomy** – At Oregon Medical Group, corporate restructuring abruptly severed patients from their long-time doctors, creating chaos and disrupting continuity of care.³

These are not isolated incidents. Since 2020, Oregon has seen a rise in corporate takeovers that sacrifice patient outcomes for short term financial gains.

The Role of SB 951

SB 951 reinforces the Corporate Practice of Medicine doctrine by ensuring that physicians retain ultimate authority over clinical decisions. This bill does not ban private investment in healthcare—it simply prevents non-medical executives from overriding the judgment of trained, licensed physicians. Without strong protection like those outlined in SB 951, corporate entities will continue to expand their influence over medical decision-making, eroding patient trust and putting profits ahead of health outcomes.

A Call to Action: Protect Oregon’s Healthcare System

Oregon has long been a leader in healthcare innovation and patient-centered care, but unchecked private equity expansion threatens the model of care many communities rely on. SB 951 is a necessary and reasonable step to ensure that patient care remains in the hands of those who are trained, licensed, and ethically bound to provide it.

As a union of healthcare workers and patient advocates, SEIU urges the committee to pass SB 951 and take a stand against the corporatization of healthcare. Healthcare’s return on investment should be measured by patient well-being—not by the billions returned to private equity investors across this country.

I urge your support for SB 951 to protect the integrity of our healthcare system.

³ [Optum, buyer of Eugene's Oregon Medical Group, tells patients to seek care elsewhere as physicians leave - oregonlive.com](https://www.oregonlive.com/story/news/politics/elections/2022/09/28/optum-buyer-of-eugene-s-oregon-medical-group-tells-patients-to-see-care-elsewhere-as-physicians-leave-oregonlive.com)