

Submitter: Tracy Sweely  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB951

Dear Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden, and Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care,

Bay Area Hospital is currently in negotiations to partner with Quorum Health to take over operating the hospital. Quorum is a private equity-owned healthcare management company. The community is actively organizing against this proposed affiliation; however, it is an uphill battle. In its current iteration, it is unclear if SB 951 would apply to this proposed affiliation between Bay Area Hospital and Quorum Health, and I ask that if the bill does not, can it be amended to apply?

There is a fundamental incompatibility between the two parties to the proposed affiliation. Bay Area Hospital District's mission as a Health District is to ensure access to and local control of health services. Quorum is a private-equity owned firm that since 2020 has sold and/or closed 28 of their 38 hospitals. Private-equity owned hospitals are notorious for extracting profits at the expense of quality of care, and Quorum is no different.

Imposing a for-profit model onto Bay Area Hospital would have far reaching negative financial impacts on the community it serves. The area has a fragile economy. The hospital is the largest employer in the area. The nearest alternative with comparable services is in Roseburg just under 2 hours away. The patient population is predominantly slow-growing and elderly, with a higher than average (for Oregon) number of disabled, impoverished, uninsured and unemployed. There is no more suitable situation to which SB 951 could be applied in order to "protect the health, safety and welfare of residents of this state by responding to initiatives that threaten to usurp or have the effect of usurping the medical judgment of physicians and other practitioners in this state in favor of cost-cutting and profit-making, often at the expense of and in opposition to the best interests of patients."

A partnership with a profit-driven, private-equity owned firm would exacerbate existing financial stressors in the community and funnel money out of the community where it is needed and into the pockets of private-equity investors. "Local control" would be lost under this partnership, where the Board of Trustees would no longer be elected by the community, but rather appointed by Quorum.

Again, I ask that if it does not already cover this proposed affiliation, can SB 951 be made to cover it in order to "protect the best interests of patients" in the financially fragile community that Bay Area Hospital serves, "and enable medical practitioners to

exercise medical judgment free from interference from those who are not licensed to practice medicine in this state."

Thank you,  
Tracy Sweely