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On Behalf Of:
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Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3227

Oregon Medical Group in Eugene was surreptitiously bought out by Optum, an arm of United Health Care, in late 2020. By the summer of 2023 they were firing doctors or forcing them to quit due, among other things, to ever increasing patient to doctor ratios, and the lack of time allowed for appointments to provide good service to their patients. I described losing my and my husband's doctors in my written testimony in support of HB 3225.

I lost my dermatologist, my pain doctor, the anesthesiologists who had worked with my pain doctor, and ultimately my primary care provider. All but my PCP had non-compete agreements enforced against them, barring them from practicing in Lane County, Oregon, for one year. In each instance, there were not sufficient doctors in Eugene to take on the load of patients who lost their doctors at OMG.

My husband and I were referred to an outside dermatologist's office when our excellent dermatologist was let go, and had a one year non-compete in Lane county enforced against her. This referral turned out to be to a practice which was largely "aesthetician" driven, not what we were interested in. Meanwhile our Mayo trained dermatologist left the country before finally returning a year later to open a practice with her husband in Eugene.

I was referred to doctors at two pain clinics when my pain doctor left OMG. He was allowed to stay in Lane county but was only allowed to work at a methadone clinic. Neither of the clinics I was referred to would prescribe medications for new patients, they would only do procedures. My PCP agreed to prescribe my pain medications, which was fine until she too left OMG.

I saw my PCP literally shrink in size from the stress of her job under Optum's administration. She was not allowed to tell her patients that she was leaving, and despite having a non-compete enforced against her, OMG/Optum would not disclose to patients whether she would be practicing in Lane county. In fact, my husband and I never were notified by OMG/Optum that she was leaving her practice. We only discovered she was gone when we were unable to get new prescriptions filled for medications on which we rely. At that point we were told that our PCP was no longer employed there, that we should have received a letter weeks ago, and that they did not have any doctors available for us.

This was the case for many people. When I called the only other medical group in

Eugene, PeaceHealth, to get on a waiting list for a doctor I was told that they could not accommodate all of the patients coming out of OMG/Optum who had lost their PCPs.

We need to do better by our doctors and our communities. This bill will give doctors the opportunity to stay where they and their families live, and to retain the ability to provide continuity of care to patients, when leaving a medical practice for whatever reason. And it will help communities', especially small communities, residents to be able to access healthcare near where they live.