

April 25, 2025

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB 951. This is a critical piece of legislation that will protect the integrity of medical practice in Oregon by ensuring that physicians retain ultimate authority over decisions which impact patient care. This is especially critical right now as access to care is limited in some spaces and getting health care provided by experts is crucial.

As a physician, I have taken an oath to do what is right for my patients. It can be difficult to balance that with constraints of financial sustainability. However, at the core of healthcare is making sure that medicine is lead by medical experts. This balance is the core of our healthcare system, preserved by the corporate practice of medicine doctrine that has existed in Oregon since 1947—a doctrine which more than 30 other states have also adopted.

Vertically integrated insurance companies and private equity firms do not always share this mission. Their primary duty is not to patients or communities but to shareholders and investors, with financial returns as their primary objective. Unlike physicians, they are not bound by an oath to prioritize patient welfare, nor do they bear the ethical responsibility of making clinical decisions in the best interests of those they serve. Instead, the profit they seek to maximize often leads them to deny medically necessary care, cut critical support staff, and push patients toward high-margin, low-value treatments. These measures not only undermine patient outcomes but also place an increasing burden on physicians and frontline healthcare workers.

Without strong protections like those outlined in SB 951, these corporate entities will continue to expand their influence over medical decision-making, eroding the corporate practice of medicine doctrine and putting profits ahead of the health and well-being of our communities.

We have already seen the real-world consequences of this issue unfold in Oregon where a decision is made that affects patients that really has to do with a financial bottom line of a corporation, not what is best for patients. When patient care becomes secondary to financial objectives, we see poorer health outcomes, increased strain on remaining providers, and a loss of trust in our healthcare system.

This bill does not ban private equity investment in medicine. It does not prohibit professional medical entities from contracting with Management Services Organizations for business and administrative support. It simply ensures that physicians retain ultimate authority over clinical matters—decisions that impact patient health and safety.

SB 951 is a necessary and reasonable step to close these loopholes and restore decision-making power to those who are trained, licensed, and ethically bound to care for patients. Oregon's physicians must be empowered to make medical decisions based on science, evidence, and individual patient needs.

Thank you for your time,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Michelle Shaw". The signature is written in a dark ink on a light background.

Michelle Shaw, MD, FACEP