

Submitter:	Bruce Thomson physician
On Behalf Of:	Patients harmed by CPOM practices
Committee:	House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic:	SB951

Measure SB 951-A (Engrossed) Bruce Thomson

I am Bruce Thomson, MS, MD a retired family physician from private independent Medical practice. I write in support of SB 951-A, a critical bill to protect the integrity of medical practice in Oregon. SB 951-A is especially important to support and maintain independent medical practices throughout Oregon, in rural areas and metropolitan areas alike. For decades, the ethical dilemma Corporate Practice of Medicine (aka CORPORATE) poses has been problematic for medical ethics. The State of Oregon since 1947 has recognized that a conflict exists between the economic imperatives of for-profit corporations and other business entities and the need for patient-centered medical care.

Despite (CORPORATE) claims of “improving health care”, the preponderance of evidence hasn’t yet suggested commensurate improvements in quality, access, efficiency, or equity of health care. Corporate Practice of Medicine threatens the doctor-patient relationship, undermines clinical decision-making and most egregiously prioritizes profits over patient care. Witness the voluminous public outrage to (CORPORATE) practices posted nationally by individual patients’ across the country, following the murder of the CEO for a multinational health insurer just a few months ago. CORPORATE practices in private equity transactions often will cut the "captive" physicians in on the profits by giving them a minority equity stake in the Management Services Organizations creating a built-in financial conflict of interest problematic for medical ethics.

From New England Journal of Medicine: (1). “Emerging empirical evidence suggests three primary risks that CORPORATE medicine poses: (a) increased health care prices and spending owing to market consolidation and exploitation of payment loopholes; (b) moral injury and burnout among physicians, nurses and medical staff ; (c) patient care concerns associated with changes in practice patterns and scheduling pressures due to reduce staffing, including on site staffing of medical laboratory access". (2) A separate study in the New England Journal of Medicine showed that when Private Equity buys a clinic, (a) costs rise by as much as 20%, (b) patient time spent with the provider decreases, (c) unnecessary procedures go up, and (d) the risk of complications rises.

Across Oregon, patients have already felt the impact of (CORPORATE) practices; (a)

A Private-equity backed dialysis clinic in a coastal community announced it would abruptly shut down, leaving a rural, coastal community with few options. One woman said: "Two or three people have said they're just going to call it a day, stop dialysis, and go home to be with the Lord in a couple of days." (b) - Private-equity-owned Sound Physicians, who won the Providence anesthesiology contract, led to a 50% decline in surgeries, with thousands estimated to have been canceled, according to a story on The Oregonian.

I urge the House Behavioral Health and Health Care Committee to more strictly regulate (CORPORATE) practices and "voids and makes unenforceable agreements that violate prohibitions against management services organization control of professional medical entities and permits a professional medical entity or medical licensee to sue to recover an ascertainable loss of money or property as a result of the violation".

These further regulations will ameliorate harmful aspects that Oregon patients and medical providers are suffering as a result of injurious practices. I urge this committee to support the Oregon Supreme Court decision banning corporations from owning medical practices, practicing medicine or employing physicians for that reason. "To protect the best interests of patients in this state, and enable medical practitioners to exercise medical judgment free from interference from those who are not licensed to practice medicine in this state, the Legislative Assembly must prohibit business entities from practicing medicine.