

Submitter: Alex Polikoff

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB951

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Javadi and Nelson, and members of the House Behavioral Health and Health Care Committee;

I write in strong support of SB 951.

There is plenty of evidence that the explosion of corporate ownership of medical practices is resulting in reduced access to healthcare as well as increased cost. The resultant moral injury to providers only worsens our doctor shortage. Private equity, national, and international corporations are beholden to their investors and shareholders, not the health and well-being of Oregonians. Do we really want a health care system in our state that allows real estate investment trusts to control how a medical practice is operated? The purpose of our healthcare system should be healthcare, not profits.

SB 951 does not make wholesale changes to how health care is delivered or paid for, it merely closes loopholes that currently allow administrators without medical training (MSO's) to directly or indirectly control healthcare decisions for patients. It also protects a doctor's freedom to speak out and practice where they want without repercussion; this is especially critical when corporate control forces doctors to abandon their practice in order to be able to properly care for patients.

On a personal note, I am very concerned that corporate takeover of local clinics (as has happened both here in Corvallis and in Eugene) is limiting my options of who I can see for medical treatment and how I will be treated. My urologist has joined the many physicians who have left the Corvallis Clinic since its takeover by Optum. It is clear that the Optum buyout has impacted local access to healthcare; I have many friends locally who have to wait for up to 6 months to get an appointment with a primary care physician, if they can even find one.

Both the Oregon Constitution and OHA have stated goals of healthcare affordability, equity, and access; corporate practice of medicine threatens all of these goals. Please support this very modest measure so that we can help retain local ownership and control of our Oregon healthcare providers and work towards our common goal of a healthier Oregon.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

Alex Polikoff  
Corvallis, OR