

Members of the house healthcare committee, I am writing in support of SB951 to help protect the practice of medicine and keep it in the hands of physicians.

In a time when corporations and hospital systems are attempting to vertically consolidate the healthcare system, we need strong language that helps retain Physician control over medicine. After completing my residency I only interviewed at Physician owned practices, because as a new graduate I did not want insurance companies, private equity, or hospital systems dictating how I practiced medicine or putting profits over patients. I comfortably moved across the country to join Oregon medical group because of their reputation, and the friendliness of their physicians and staff. Unfortunately, shortly after I joined they they were acquired by optum - due to the financial stressors of the pandemic and declining primary care reimbursement across payors. I saw first hand how the physician leadership I was looking for became middle management with the physicians powerless to increase wages for support staff, approve part time requests, and have the final say on work flow implementations. More and more work fell on fewer people and it felt like we were being asked to more with less. This top down corporate structure lead to the loss of dozens of physicians from our community, some were prohibited from working as their legacy non compete clauses were enforced and other restrictive covenants were imposed. Things got to a boiling point where thousands of patients were dismissed from the practice after dozens of clinicians (who were required to give a 6 month notice) left the practice.

By strengthening the laws on the corporate practice of medicine, we send a signal to physicians around the country that Oregon prioritizes Physician ownership and control over the practice of medicine, and place protections for patients from the inherent conflict of corporate interests and preventative care.

SB951 Reflects over a year of conversations with stake holders, including physicians to find the best language possible to get at the core of these ownership loopholes while minimizing the impact on small independent practices like my own. I fully support this bill and the collaborative processes it has been through.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony in support of SB951.

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Physician and Founder of Clear Health DPC