

Submitter: David Russo

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB4130

February 6, 2024

Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. David Russo. I have been a board-certified pain management physician in Oregon for over 17 years. My specialty is considered an attractive acquisition target for private equity (PE) investors as, in their view, patients with chronic, disabling, often incurable diseases create steady income streams. I receive at least two solicitations per week from PE groups who want to acquire my practice, aggregate my patients, and consolidate my operations into their existing MSO schemes and structure.

When I meet with their representatives and unpack their offers, I always learn that these deals are bad for patients, local communities, and doctors. By controlling medical practice ownership and governance, outside investors, not doctors, determine what treatments should be offered to patients in a community. By choosing performance and operations metrics for a practice, investors, not doctors, decide which health plans to contract with, how many patients a clinician should see daily, and where should be referred for other services. The intentions of the new bosses who run these clinics are not to improve the health and well-being of the community; they are to fatten the bottom line.

Patients in Oregon deserve to know who their doctor works for. Strong disclosure requirements on the sale and governance of medical practices are vital for the informed consent of patients seeking medical treatment. Similarly, the heart of owning and controlling a medical practice is overseeing its daily operations, quality metrics, contracting, credentialing, evaluating, and implementing new treatments and modalities, and ensuring that the services offered to patients in their communities are appropriate for their needs.

Patients are not ATMs, and patient outcomes are not Excel formulas on a spreadsheet. Oregon must avoid the mistakes other states have made by abandoning strong principles about the corporate practice of medicine. Without disclosure and enforcement of medical practice ownership regulations, unscrupulous profiteers will strip-mine our local healthcare markets and extract every bit of profit for their gain.

Support HB 4130 and send the message that the practice of medicine in Oregon is

not for sale.

Sincerely,

David Russo, DO, MPH

Board Certified Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

Board Certified Pain Medicine

Board Certified Addiction Medicine

Columbia Pain Management, PC