

OREGON INDEPENDENT MEDICAL COALITION

Support for HB 4130

The Oregon Independent Medical Coalition would like to express support for HB 4130, which takes important steps to strengthen Oregon's laws governing the corporate practice of medicine and safeguard the independent practice of health care in our state.

The Oregon Independent Medical Coalition represents physician owned clinics and 1,600 providers in communities across the state. The coalition advocates for reasonable regulations and public policy for these health clinics to remain independent and serve tens of thousands of Oregonians with quality, affordable and accessible care in their communities.

Our independent clinics are physician owned and operated, founded on the principle that keeping physicians in control of clinical care decisions and operations will derive the best outcomes for patients and the communities we serve. The corporate acquisition of medical practices threatens to take care out of the hands of doctors, driving up costs and shifting profitability out of our communities into larger national entities while not improving access or quality.

HB 4130 shields medical practices from corporate-owned Management Service Organizations (MSOs) exerting control over clinical operations, while recognizing that MSOs governed by local physicians can be important tools in lowering costs and increasing quality.

We believe it is reasonable and beneficial to require transparency in the governance and corporate ownership of health care entities, and we see no harm in providing more information to patients and consumers about who leads the organizations with whom they entrust their health. We also support ending the use of non-disclosure and non-disparagement clauses to foster greater transparency and empower physicians to speak openly about employment practices.

We support eliminating non-compete agreements for staff physicians as there is currently a shortage of practitioners creating a crisis in access to health care. We believe non-compete agreements create more barriers to access, reduce advocacy for patient safety and stifle competition for the independent physician groups.

By tightening up the laws around physician control of medical practices, HB 4130 acknowledges the challenges that independent health care providers face with increasing pressure to consolidate. There are a multitude of factors, including mounting costs, workforce challenges, state mandates, reimbursement rates and administrative burden, that are driving many clinics to resort to these acquisitions. We hope the legislature will pass HB 4130 as part of a broader effort to foster a health care system and regulatory environment where physician-owned clinics can remain viable and independent.

