

February 23rd, 2024

Dear Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, and Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care,

My name is Carly Hood-Ronick, and I am writing to you today as the CEO of Portland-based nonprofit organization Project Access NOW to encourage you to support HB 4130 and curb corporate investment in health care. Oregon has not been immune to the rise of private equity ownership of medical practices in our country, with investment rising 100,000% over the last decade from \$15 million to \$16 billion annually. Historically, Oregon has banned corporate ownership of primary care practices, but those protections have weakened and loopholes have emerged that have allowed corporate influence to go unchecked. We are now faced with the opportunity to codify Oregon's longstanding values of patient-first health care and provider protection into law and reaffirm our commitment to banning corporate influence in primary care.

As corporate investment in health care has risen, it's no secret that health care costs for patients have skyrocketed as a result. Last year, Project Access NOW assisted 2,606 uninsured individuals to access donated primary and specialty care, paid the monthly insurance premiums of 547 more, and assisted 1,848 individuals with free or low-cost prescriptions. It's clear that Oregonians are struggling with affordability more than ever, with health care spending in Oregon increasing 40% in just the last 8 years. Data shows that when providers maintain control of their practices, health care remains affordable for patients. When the health care delivery model places profits as the primary interest, corners are cut, and worse care for the patient is the result. Now is the time to ensure that decision-making in medical practices is left in the hands of clinical providers, free from profit-maximization interests.

HB 4130 would require licensed physicians to have majority control of professional corporations set up to practice medicine and especially maintain control over patient care in their practices, even if they use a management services organization for administrative work like billing. It would close loopholes in existing law to protect patients and providers. This will result in better care for patients, lower health care costs, and give providers the agency they deserve as licensed medical professionals. Let's do the right thing for Oregon and stay ahead of the curve. Thank you for your important work on

this matter, and we encourage you to support this essential legislation for all Oregonians.

Thank you,
Carly Hood-Ronick MPA, MPH



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