

Submitter: Lina Pezzella
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure: HB4130

I am an emergency physician who worked for nearly a decade in a physician group that was for all intents and purposes owned by private equity. We were paid by a shell corporation with a physician director who passed on the dictates of the private equity employer. We physicians joked that there seemed to be rotating "dictate of the quarter"; ranging from sending a particular lab test on the majority of patients (whether we felt it was indicated or not) so we don't fall out of certain reimbursement measures, to feeding us medical decision making language we had to use to ensure our billers could maximize billing under the recently revamped system. In the course of that decade, patients per hour went from 2.5 to an average of 4, with some shifts seeing up to six patients per hour. We were forced to "supervise" midlevel providers, which really meant just signing off on their charts given the volume we were asked to see. The hospital system, which was owned by a large publicly traded healthcare company whose top stock holders are investment management, private equity and hedge funds, routinely closed available beds in the ER claiming "low census", forcing us to see and treat the majority of our ER patients in the lobby. Those of us who complained this provided substandard care and was unsafe for patients were told to seek employment elsewhere.

Upon reflection, they were right that the care probably wasn't substandard. Unfortunately this is the new "standard" of American Healthcare across the nation. Profits have become more important than patients. Incentives promote increased and often unnecessary testing, and there is a disturbing trend towards replacing physicians with midlevel providers with a fraction of the education and experience because they can be obtained at lower hourly rate and with far less pushback against the "dictates of the quarter".

I am writing to support this legislation and attaching my name to this email despite the personal risk of becoming blacklisted with the majority of potential employers in this country. I am doing so because this legislation is the first of its kind (as far as I know), and critically important to ensuring that the people of Oregon will have quality healthcare in the future. I hope that other states will follow suit! Don't believe the private equity lobbyists that this bill will reduce access to care. There are many of us in healthcare that would be excited to move to a state where we can actual fulfill the oaths we took. We do not need business people with no healthcare background to run our hospitals and clinics. We need a change in mentality; a return to a system that values patient outcomes over profits. This bill is an important first step to that goal.