



The Honorable Deb Patterson
Oregon State Capitol
Senate Committee on Health Care
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

February 26, 2024

Dear Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

We are writing to express our deep concern to HB 4130 and oppose as drafted. As physicians leading Compass Oncology and Willamette Valley Cancer Institute and Research Center (WVCI), we emphasize the critical importance of preserving physician independence and autonomy in healthcare delivery, especially in oncology. Contrary to the legislation's intended goal of reducing costs and protecting independent medicine, HB 4130 as written would reduce well-intended relationships and drive independent medicine towards hospitals where care is often more expensive.

The proposed bill, while well-intentioned, poses significant risks to the longstanding relationship we have with The US Oncology Network (The Network), which has been instrumental in improving patient access to life-saving cancer treatments, clinical trials, and cutting-edge technologies. As independent physician-owned practices, with the well-balanced support from The Network that we as independent physicians have chosen as their business management services provider, WVCI and Compass can prioritize focusing on patient care.

Independent oncology practices like ours face significant financial challenges, including maintaining costly drug inventories and medical facilities, administrative infrastructure, and treatment equipment. Without the flexibility to collaborate effectively with our management services organization (MSO), The Network, we and our patient's risk being forced into higher-cost settings, ultimately compromising patient care quality and accessibility.

For more than 25 years, The Network's support has been instrumental in helping us navigate a variety of operational pressures, from healthcare consolidation to dramatic changes in cancer care to the COVID-19 pandemic. As written, this legislation would severely impede our ability to access the resources we need to remain efficient and operational, and further limit our ability to remain competitive with large health systems who are able to charge more for the same level of care.

Independent cancer practices choose to work with organizations like The Network to effectively manage the overwhelming amount of administrative work that practices must juggle to remain compliant. These regulatory burdens interfere with care delivery and diminish the physician-patient relationship – making it almost impossible to operate an independent practice today. In fact, according to the [American Medical Association](#), the share of physicians working in private practice fell by 13% from 2012 to 2022, with physicians citing payers' regulatory and administrative requirements as a top motivating factor in deciding to sell to a hospital or health system.

As currently drafted, Oregon HB 4130 will have unintended and damaging effects, hindering physicians' ability to remain independent. Clarifications and revisions are necessary to address our concerns and ensure the legislation achieves its intended goals without undue adverse effects. We ask the committee

and Oregon lawmakers to reconsider passing this fast-tracked legislation until adequate stakeholder engagement and concerns have been addressed.

We are happy to answer any questions and appreciate your consideration of this urgent matter. please direct them to Shawn Miller at shawn@millerpublicaffairs.com, and he will ensure you receive answers in a timely manner.

Sincerely,

Matthew Lonergan

Matthew Lonergan, MD
Practice President
Willamette Valley Cancer Institute and Research Center

Dr. Scott Rushing

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Compass Oncology