

3/4/2026

Statement by Eugene Emergency Physicians for Senate Committee  
On Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs

Chairman Senator Manning, Co-Chair Senator Thatcher and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak.

For the record my name is Dr. Julie Seo. My name is Dr. Jeremy Brown.

I am a board-certified emergency physician and have served in Eugene, Springfield, and Cottage Grove for the past 20 years. I am here as a physician, an Oregonian, a parent, a Eugene neighbor, who has cared for this community at its most vulnerable moments. I speak on behalf of my partners at Eugene Emergency Physicians (EEP).

For 35 years, since 1991, our independent physician-owned group has grown with the community from 9 original members to 41 providers that include 32 board certified emergency medicine physicians and 9 physician assistants. EEP has staffed the emergency departments at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend, PeaceHealth University District until its closure, and PeaceHealth Cottage Grove without requiring any outside staffing assistance. This is approximately 150,000 shifts that we have staffed over the decades.

We are Lane County's safety net and the frontline of public health and disaster response.

In 2022, during the mass shooting at WOW Hall in Eugene, 12 additional emergency medicine physicians came to the hospital within minutes, voluntarily, because we live here, we care about the

community, our colleagues and our department. We have responded similarly over the years to the 1998 Thurston High shooting and 2015 Umpqua Community College shooting.

We are medical directors for local EMS, fire agencies, and health non-profits. We serve on hospital leadership, quality improvement and credentialing committees. We teach various EMS, medical, PA students from across Oregon schools to invest in the future of Oregon's health. Members of our group are represented on various boards or committees with the OMB and OHA.

We are integrated in the emergency management ecosystem.

Emergency medicine is organized chaos, high-acuity, time-critical, and dependent on trust built over years and decades. Just last week, we treated a patient who was critically injured on the job. Because our team has trained and worked together for years, the prehospital EMS, emergency physician, ER nurses and staff, trauma surgeon and anesthesiologist, provided life-saving interventions including blood transfusions, and chest tubes within minutes. The patient was able to walk out of the hospital Monday.

Last week, three hundred sixty-five physicians at RiverBend, 98 percent of medical staff, voted in favor of retaining EEP. We have the support of every speciality physician group. We have the support of the Oregon Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians, American Academy of Emergency Medicine, Oregon Nurses Association, Eugene Springfield Firefighters Local 851, US Representative Val Hoyle, State Senators and Representatives, Eugene and Springfield Mayors, City Council and many more.

This level of unity is extraordinary and should be heard.

Replacing this stable, locally committed 41-provider team with a new externally managed staffing company, which may be reliant on temporary or rotating coverage, introduces risk to:

- Surge capacity
- Disaster response coordination
- Workforce retention
- Continuity of care

Our community has already experienced healthcare disruption. When Optum, owned by UnitedHealth Group acquired the locally owned Oregon Medical Group, many primary care physicians left and patients found it harder to access primary care. Today, six years later, patients still struggle to find providers and increasingly rely on the emergency department for their health care or even medication refills.

Now, at this vulnerable moment, we have been informed that EEP will be replaced by ApolloMD, a national staffing company headquartered 3000 miles away in Atlanta, Georgia.

Oregon Senate Bill 951 reflects this Legislature's recognition that certain corporate structures in healthcare can affect patient access and outcomes. Oregon law has long required that medical practices be owned by licensed physicians and that clinical decision-making remains under physician control; not corporate ownership.

We respectfully ask this body to consider:

- Whether emergency department transitions of this magnitude should receive state-level review.

- Whether full transparency regarding ownership and decision-making control of the companies involved should be required.
- And whether there should be authority for oversight, including, if necessary, the right to seek judicial relief, when a transition may materially affect emergency preparedness and public safety infrastructure.

This is about ensuring that Lane County's emergency system remains stable, locally accountable, and disaster-ready.

Please take into consideration the urgency of this matter as Eugene Emergency Physicians are trying to navigate these uncertain times.

Maintaining this healthy, experienced group of 41 emergency medicine providers who live here and serve here strengthens Oregon's health and emergency preparedness.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to protecting the safety and health of our State.