



February 6, 2025

Dr. Sejal Hathi, M.D., M.B.A
Director
Oregon Health Authority

Submitted via hcmo.info@oha.oregon.gov

Dear Director Hathi,

My name is Joe Ness, and I am submitting comments on OHSU's application to combine with Legacy Health. I have been serving as OHSU's Chief Operating Officer since 2018. A major focus of my work has been figuring out how to provide timely access to care during a time of constrained capacity. My strong support for combining with Legacy Health is based on the important role this would play in increasing access to care for Oregonians.

If you have tried to get care for yourself or a loved one recently, you have most likely experienced excessive wait times, regardless of what health care system the appointment was with or what type of provider was needed. This is true for those seeking preventative care, visiting the emergency department, scheduling a surgical procedure or in a need of a hospital bed. Simply put, the status quo is not working.

So how will the combination protect and increase access to care? The filing offers three main commitments: investing in Legacy's facilities and services; recruiting more health care staff; and more efficiently managing Legacy's hospital capacity.

\$1 billion capital investment

Legacy Health has identified significant deferred maintenance in their facilities and equipment. Legacy does not have the funding to address this issue on their own, one of the reasons they are looking for a partner. If these needs are not addressed, it would further endanger patient access and the system's ability to retain staff. OHSU made a commitment to invest \$1 billion over time in Legacy's facilities to keep these buildings in operation, protecting access to care.

Staff recruitment

Staff shortages at Legacy Health are limiting access to care today. Legacy has medical/surgical beds and critical care beds that are unfilled because they lack staff for them. Staffing shortages are also causing Legacy's operating rooms to be underutilized. This results in thousands of patients being unserved each year. Out of all the health systems operating in Oregon, OHSU has the best

track record for retaining and recruiting staff. By combining, we can bring our staffing expertise to bear to increase the use of these existing Legacy Health facilities.

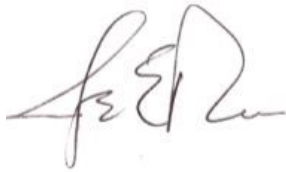
Better managed beds

OHSU has in place a sophisticated "patient management system" that operates like air traffic control for resources and patient flow, through a complex hospital system. As a result of this system and trained staff, OHSU has been able to maximize the use of our hospital beds so we can serve the most patients possible. If the combination moves forward, we will be able to incorporate Legacy facilities across Oregon and SW Washington into our patient management system, helping ensure more people have access to the care they need, when they need it.

The combination of Legacy Health with OHSU is a generational opportunity to create an integrated public university health system dedicated in statue to serving the health and well-being of people in Oregon and beyond. Together, we can break the status quo and expand access to care for people who need it.

Thanks so much for considering my comments in your decision-making.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe E. Ness', written in a cursive style.

Joe E. Ness, MHA, BSPHarm

Senior Vice President & Chief Operating Officer

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