

## Public Comments

The [Health Care Market Oversight](#) (HCMO) program reviews proposed health care business deals to make sure they support Oregon's goals of health equity, lower costs, increased access, and better care. This document presents public comments related to the HCMO review of 040 Samaritan-Santiam. OHA accepted public comments during the preliminary review period. Public comments were received via email to [hcmo.info@oha.oregon.gov](mailto:hcmo.info@oha.oregon.gov), voicemail, or by filling out the [Public Comment Form](#). Comments are presented below in the order received and may include typos or misspellings. Personal contact information for individuals has been removed.

OHA expresses no views on the substance of these comments, and their publication does not constitute an endorsement by OHA of the views expressed.

You can get this document in other languages, large print, braille or a format you prefer free of charge. Contact us by email at [hcmo.info@oha.oregon.gov](mailto:hcmo.info@oha.oregon.gov) or by phone at 503-945-6161. We accept all relay calls.

### 1. No subject, 12/17/24

I've been told that this merger will not negatively affect community services, but I'd like to better understand how a monopoly can be advantageous for patient care? Right now, Samaritan no longer accepts United Healthcare insurance, while Santiam still does. After the merger, where will United Healthcare patients go for care? Numerous studies show that hospital prices and profits tend to increase in markets with less competition, and this merger seems to be creating a de facto monopoly. The "non-profit" status doesn't change the fact that the additional profits will likely be used for high executive salaries and unnecessary upgrades rather than addressing immediate community needs. Samaritan needs competition, and the community deserves choices when it comes to healthcare.

Kristin Thompson

### 2. No subject, 3/5/25

If Santiam Hospital and Samaritan Health Services formally affiliate and are under the Samaritan umbrella, Santiam Hospital and all associated clinics will no longer be in network with United Healthcare. This will leave Santiam Hospital out of network along with the other Samaritan hospitals, Lebanon and Albany. This is a great disservice to everyone in the Lebanon, Albany, Scio, Jefferson, Stayton, Mill City and surrounding areas. This will leave one hospital, Salem Health, as the only in network hospital in a 20 mile radius of Scio, OR.

Janie Peters

### **3. No subject, 5/14/25**

I think this is a good thing and needs to progress. Otherwise Santiam is going to be swallowed up by Salem Health, Kaiser Perm or some for profit like Optum all of which could result in loss of services to the area that Santiam currently provides. The affiliation plan outlined by Samaritan and Santiam points to maintaining the services available in the area. There are many folks concerned about the lack of UnitedHealth insurance but the reason healthcare systems are not renewing contracts with United Health Group is directly related to UHG's failure to pay their bills in a timely manner and at a reasonable rate. UHG's \$14.4 Billion profits in 2024 indicate there is no lack of funds to be distributed, therefore I encourage people to move away from UHG in their next open enrollment period and not let that be a deterrent to moving this affiliation forward.

Rita Smith

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## **About HCMO**

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The Healthcare Market Oversight Program reviews proposed health care business deals to make sure they support statewide goals related to cost, equity, access, and quality. For more info, you can connect with HCMO staff:

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