

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 061 Asante – Surgery Center of Southern Oregon. Public comments were received via email to 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 or by phone at 503-945-6161. We accept all relay calls.

1. 11/2/2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in response to the proposed plans for Asante to acquire the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

My name is Sherri McFarland, and I am currently a surgical nurse and operating room supervisor at SCSO. I would like to begin by expressing my appreciation to the Health Care Market Oversight (HCMO) program for welcoming public input during this transaction review process.

Although employees may not be fully aware of the company’s financial details, we have witnessed a steady decline in procedure volumes at our facility over the past several years. Because of this, we understand the potential advantages that could come with Asante’s acquisition of SCSO. Still, I would be remiss not to take this

opportunity to voice the hopes of our staff and community—to preserve the qualities that make our surgery center special within Southern Oregon.

If the acquisition is approved, our greatest hope is to maintain the personalized, convenient, cost-effective, and patient-centered care that SCSO has become known for. We believe the best way to achieve this is by retaining the current clinical staff after the acquisition. In addition, if new team members are needed, we feel it is important that hiring decisions remain under the direction of the surgery centers supervisors and managers to help preserve the strong culture and collaborative environment we have worked so diligently to develop.

The majority of our employees previously worked at local hospitals—either Asante or Providence—before joining SCSO. While I cannot speak for everyone, many of us who came from hospital settings accepted a substantial pay reduction in exchange for a more balanced work-life environment and the opportunity to be part of a close-knit, family-like workplace. We have built a cohesive, team-oriented culture that enables us to deliver the kind of care that keeps patients returning to us throughout their lives.

One of the greatest concerns among our staff—particularly within the operating room—is the possibility of being reassigned or rotated between the surgery center and the hospital. We respectfully request that clinical staff at the surgery center remain designated to work exclusively at the surgery center. Maintaining consistent staffing is critical to sustaining the trust and comfort our patients have come to expect.

Many of our patients know our staff by name and see the same familiar faces regularly—whether through our pain clinic, surgical services, or endo services. This familiarity significantly reduces the anxiety often associated with surgery and helps ensure consistently high-quality care.

Below are just a few examples of patient feedback shared on SCSO’s Facebook page:

- “What a great bunch of people! From the minute you walk through the door. Everything explained, great treatment by all. Thank you all so much for getting me and my nerves through my procedure.” – M.M.
- “Fantastic organization with quality people.” – L.O.S.
- “From the moment you enter the facility, you feel at ease. Checking in is simple and straightforward. The staff are knowledgeable, well informed, and make you feel like a

real person first, and a patient after that. The nurses, staff, and contingent folks move about efficiently and still make time for a reassuring nod or a helpful dialogue.” – M.M.

- “What a great staff—very efficient, very friendly! Highly recommend over any other surgery center I have been to.” – D.A.

These reviews reflect what we at SCSO value most: exceptional, compassionate, and consistent patient care.

In closing, I respectfully ask that HCMO and Asante ensure that SCSO’s current clinical staff remain in place, that they continue to be assigned exclusively to the surgery center, and that any future staffing decisions remain under the authority of the surgery center leadership team. This will help preserve the culture and quality of care our community has come to expect from SCSO—regardless of who owns the facility.

Thank you for your time, attention, and commitment to hearing from those directly impacted by this transition.

Sincerely,

Sherri McFarland, RN, BSN

Surgical Nurse & Operating Room Supervisor

Surgery Center of Southern Oregon

2. 11/5/2025

OHA Office of Health Policy

HCMO Transactions and Reviews

Subject: Transaction 061 Asante-SCSO

To Whom it May Concern,

I am a neurosurgeon who lives and practices in southern Oregon and has routinely provided services at the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (“SCSO”).

For the last several years, SCSO has had declining volumes and financial challenges. SCSO is majority owned by small independent practice groups and lacks the financial

capacity to sustain operations - especially in light of anticipated changes to the health care landscape.

I believe the proposed sale of SCSO to Asante is essential to preserving access to outpatient surgical care in our region. If this sale is unable to proceed, I personally don't believe SCSO will remain a financially viable option to the community for outpatient procedures that span multiple specialties and a valuable patient care option will be lost. The sale to Asante will allow for additional patient volumes and financial stability.

Asante, a locally governed nonprofit health system, has consistently demonstrated its commitment to our community. Its plans to invest in and renovate the surgery center will modernize the facility and ensure high-quality care for patients now and in the future.

I respectfully urge approval of this transaction to help maintain vital health care services for southern Oregon residents.

David H. Walker, MD, FAANS

Neurosurgery

3. 11/5/2025

To Whom it May Concern,

I am a gastroenterologist who lives and practices in Southern Oregon and provide patient care at the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon.

For the last several years, SCSO has had declining volumes and financial challenges. SCSO is majority owned by small independent practice groups and lacks the financial capacity to sustain operations - especially in light of anticipated changes to the health care landscape.

I believe the proposed sale of SCSO to Asante is essential to preserving access to outpatient surgical care in our region.

Asante, a locally governed nonprofit health system, has consistently demonstrated its commitment to our community. Its plans to invest in and renovate the surgery center

will modernize the facility and ensure high-quality care for patients now and in the future.

I respectfully urge approval of this transaction to help maintain vital health care services for southern Oregon residents.

Dr. Adam Mougey

4. 11/10/2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I have the great honor to work with and alongside the SCSO leadership and Board for the last three years. The surgery center has been a great surgical facility, and our surgeons always tout on how great it is to work there due to the efficiency and the staff.

For the future of SCSO, I want to urge to approval of the SCSO-Asante transaction to preserve patient access. Over the years, we have seen a decline in volume and financials at the center and, without the transaction, the surgery center continued operations is at risk.

Asante has proven a commitment to the community and protecting healthcare access for patients. In addition to the financial stability Asante can offer, Asante's acquisition of the surgery center can provide permanence and promote enhancement of resource utilization. Patients can continue to receive great health care provided by great surgeons and answer the demand of the increased regional population. This is a growing concern with the threat of hospital services being condensed in surrounding rural and remote areas in Oregon, looking to the Rogue Valley providers to provide answers.

Lastly, the SCSO-Asante transaction allows the two things that makes the surgery center a preferred facility for both patients and surgeons to be preserved: ability to take good care of patients and the heart of the team.

I urge the reviewers to consider the benefits to the community and workforce of SCSO under Asante's oversight and approve the transaction.

Thank you.

Kamee Wearden

5. 11/13/2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I have the privilege of serving as the Executive Director of the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO). My family and I moved to Medford from Denver nearly three years ago, and in that time Southern Oregon has truly become home. My wife serves our community through the Jackson County Library system, and our daughter attends a local preschool where she has built meaningful relationships with classmates and teachers. We are deeply grateful to live, work, and raise our family in this community.

For 28 years, SCSO has played a critical role in our regional healthcare system by providing high-quality outpatient surgical and procedural care. I joined this organization with a clear purpose: to preserve and build upon the exceptional legacy that physicians and staff have worked so diligently to create. Each day, I see our teams deliver care with compassion, skill, and dedication. I am proud to say that this organization, its staff, and its physician partners represent one of the region's greatest healthcare assets.

Despite this success, industry-wide economic pressures and volume changes have created financial challenges that place the long-term viability of SCSO at risk. The potential loss of outpatient surgery capacity in Southern Oregon would have a meaningful impact on patients, families, surgeons, and the broader care delivery ecosystem. Maintaining access to high-quality outpatient surgical services is essential to the health and wellbeing of this community.

I recognize and appreciate OHA's responsibility to ensure that healthcare transactions protect the public interest. As both a resident of Southern Oregon and Executive Director of SCSO, I believe the proposed transaction with Asante represents the most responsible and sustainable path forward. Asante has been an engaged and collaborative minority partner, and I have seen firsthand their commitment to patient care and strengthening health services in this region. Their increased investment will provide stability for staff, preserve essential services for patients, and ensure that physicians continue to have access to a high-quality outpatient surgical facility in our community.

For these reasons, I respectfully submit my strong support for approval of this transaction. Our community deserves continued access to high-quality outpatient surgical care, and I believe this partnership is critical to securing that future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Skyler J. Dickson

6. 11/13/2025

To Whom it May Concern,

I am a general surgeon who lives and practices in Southern Oregon and provide patient care at the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon.

For the last several years, SCSO has had declining volumes and financial challenges. SCSO is majority owned by small independent practice groups and lacks the financial capacity to sustain operations - especially in light of anticipated changes to the health care landscape.

I believe the proposed sale of SCSO to Asante is essential to preserving access to outpatient surgical care in our region.

Asante, a locally governed nonprofit health system, has consistently demonstrated its commitment to our community. Its plans to invest in and renovate the surgery center will modernize the facility and ensure high-quality care for patients now and in the future.

I respectfully urge approval of this transaction to help maintain vital health care services for southern Oregon residents.

Dr. William Faught

7. 11/13/2025

To Whom it May Concern,

I am an Anesthesiologist and Interventional pain physician who lives and practices in southern Oregon and has routinely provided services at the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon ("SCSO").

For the last several years, SCSO has had declining volumes and financial challenges. SCSO is majority owned by small independent practice groups and lacks the financial capacity to sustain operations - especially in light of anticipated changes to the health care landscape.

I believe the proposed sale of SCSO to Asante is essential to preserving access to outpatient surgical care in our region.

I especially feel it is critical to maintain the SCSO as an option to provide acute and chronic pain services in an area that for years has struggled to provide the care and resources needed to this group of patients in the coastal, central and eastern, southern Oregon area.

Asante, a locally governed nonprofit health system, has consistently demonstrated its commitment to our community. Its plans to invest in and renovate the surgery center will modernize the facility and ensure high-quality care for patients now and in the future.

I respectfully urge approval of this transaction to help maintain vital health care services for southern Oregon residents.

Ted McGill, MD

8. 11/13/2025

To Whom it May Concern,

I am a plastic surgeon who lives and practices in Southern Oregon and provide patient care at the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon.

For the last several years, SCSO has had declining volumes and financial challenges. SCSO is majority owned by small independent practice groups and lacks the financial capacity to sustain operations - especially in light of anticipated changes to the health care landscape.

I believe the proposed sale of SCSO to Asante is essential to preserving access to outpatient surgical care in our region.

Asante, a locally governed nonprofit health system, has consistently demonstrated its commitment to our community. Its plans to invest in and renovate the surgery center

will modernize the facility and ensure high-quality care for patients now and in the future.

I respectfully urge approval of this transaction to help maintain vital health care services for southern Oregon residents.

Brian Kreul, MD

9. 11/13/2025

To Whom it May Concern,

I am a local business leader who lives in southern Oregon.

I understand that the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon, LLC (“SCSO”) has faced declining volumes and financial challenges in recent years. Without sufficient resources to continue operations, its future is uncertain – particularly in light of changes to the health care landscape.

I believe that the sale of SCSO to Asante is the most viable path forward to ensure the facility’s long-term sustainability and continued access to care for members of the community. Asante’s commitment to our region, coupled with its plans to invest in facility upgrades, will help preserve access to high-quality outpatient surgical care for our community.

As a business leader, I recognize that accessible health care is foundational to a thriving community and workforce. I respectfully urge approval of this transaction to safeguard these essential services.

-Erika Zepeda

10. 11/17/2025

To Whom it May Concern,

I am a general surgeon who lives and practices in Southern Oregon and provide patient care at the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon.

For the last several years, SCSO has had declining volumes and financial challenges. SCSO is majority owned by small independent practice groups and lacks the financial capacity to sustain operations - especially in light of anticipated changes to the health care landscape.

I believe the proposed sale of SCSO to Asante is essential to preserving access to outpatient surgical care in our region.

Asante, a locally governed nonprofit health system, has consistently demonstrated its commitment to our community. Its plans to invest in and renovate the surgery center will modernize the facility and ensure high-quality care for patients now and in the future.

I respectfully urge approval of this transaction to help maintain vital health care services for southern Oregon residents.

Mark Eaton, MD

11. 11/17/2025

To Whom it May Concern,

I am a podiatrist who lives and practices in Southern Oregon and provide patient care at the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon.

For the last several years, SCSO has had declining volumes and financial challenges. SCSO is majority owned by small independent practice groups and lacks the financial capacity to sustain operations - especially in light of anticipated changes to the health care landscape.

I believe the proposed sale of SCSO to Asante is essential to preserving access to outpatient surgical care in our region.

Asante, a locally governed nonprofit health system, has consistently demonstrated its commitment to our community. Its plans to invest in and renovate the surgery center will modernize the facility and ensure high-quality care for patients now and in the future.

I respectfully urge approval of this transaction to help maintain vital health care services for southern Oregon residents.

Heather Holdermann, DPM

12. 11/17/2025

To Whom it May Concern,

I am a gastroenterologist who lives and practices in Southern Oregon and provide patient care at the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon.

For the last several years, SCSO has had declining volumes and financial challenges. SCSO is majority owned by small independent practice groups and lacks the financial capacity to sustain operations - especially in light of anticipated changes to the health care landscape.

I believe the proposed sale of SCSO to Asante is essential to preserving access to outpatient surgical care in our region.

Asante, a locally governed nonprofit health system, has consistently demonstrated its commitment to our community. Its plans to invest in and renovate the surgery center will modernize the facility and ensure high-quality care for patients now and in the future.

I respectfully urge approval of this transaction to help maintain vital health care services for southern Oregon residents.

Gregory Winters, MD

13. 3/12/2026

Dear Health Care Market Oversight Program Representatives,

I am writing to express concern regarding the length of time it has taken for the State to reach a decision on the proposed transaction between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon.

The prolonged review process has created significant uncertainty and hardship for the employees and staff at the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon. Many individuals who provide essential surgical and patient care services to the community are facing ongoing instability while awaiting a final determination.

Beyond the impact on staff, the delay is also affecting the broader community. The Surgery Center of Southern Oregon provides important access to surgical care in the region, and the uncertainty surrounding this transaction has made long-term operational and financial planning extremely difficult. Given the rising costs of

healthcare and the financial pressures facing independent surgical centers, it is difficult for facilities like SCSO to remain financially viable while a decision remains pending.

The community relies on the services provided by the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon. Continued delays risk creating a significant gap in access to essential healthcare services for patients in Southern Oregon.

I understand the reason behind the HCMO process but at this point of the process it is causing more harm than benefit the Southern Oregon community and the medical professionals that serve it.

I respectfully ask that the State prioritize resolution of this matter and provide clarity as soon as possible. A timely decision would help stabilize the workforce, protect access to care for the community, and allow the involved organizations to move forward appropriately.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

Tyler Wolf, RN

14. 3/30/2026

Dear Health Care Market Oversight Program Representatives,

I am writing to express concern regarding the length of time it has taken for the State to reach a decision on the proposed transaction between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon. I have worked at the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon for nearly 14 years. I started as a Staff Nurse and now I am the Nurse Clinical Manager in the Endoscopy Department. In 2025 this endoscopy unit performed 5882 procedures, 74% of those procedures were Colonoscopies. With Colon Cancer now the leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States continued access to care and early diagnosis are key to the health of this community.

- 1) The prolonged review process has created significant uncertainty and hardship for the employees and staff at the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon. Many individuals who provide essential surgical and patient care services to the community are facing ongoing instability while awaiting a final determination.

- 2) Beyond the impact on staff, the delay is also affecting the broader community. The Surgery Center of Southern Oregon provides important access to surgical care in the region, and the uncertainty surrounding this transaction has made long-term operational and financial planning extremely difficult. Given the rising costs of healthcare and the financial pressures facing independent surgical centers, it is difficult for facilities like SCSO to remain financially viable while a decision remains pending.
- 3) The community relies on the services provided by the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon. Continued delays risk creating a significant gap in access to essential healthcare services for patients in Southern Oregon.

I understand the reason behind the HCMO process but at this point in the process is causing more harm than benefit the Southern Oregon community and the medical professionals that serve it. I believe the proposed sale of the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon to Asante is essential to preserving the access to outpatient surgical and procedural care in our region. I believe Asante's increased investment will provide stability for staff, preserves essential services for patients, and ensure that physicians continue to have access to a high-quality surgical and procedural facility in our community. I respectfully ask that the State prioritize resolution of this matter and provide clarity as soon as possible. A timely decision would help stabilize the workforce, protect access to care for the community, and allow the involved organizations to move forward appropriately.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue,

Jennifer Titus, RN, BSN

About HCMO

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:

Health Care Market Oversight
421 SW Oak St, Suite 850
Portland, OR, 97204
503-945-6161
hcmo.info@oha.oregon.gov
oregon.gov/HCMO

