



Public Comments – Emergency Exemption

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 emergency exemption request for 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. 4/23/2026

To whom it may concern:

I have worked in health administration in Oregon for 15+ years, have served as a consultant for value based performance (with a focus on outpatient surgical costs) and performed that role internally at Legacy in the Care Management department and worked as a quality analyst at Care Oregon. I also have a degree in health policy from the University of Michigan.

Failure to run your business properly is not the public's problem and it is a waste of tax payer's money to even bear witness to this falsehood of an exemption claim. This governing board was established to ensure health outcomes are being met, not to be a safety net for a failed physician's practice who have mismanaged themselves into financial ruin.

These physicians will still be physicians and be able to practice, just not under the profitable entity they are accustomed to.

HCMO should deny this request and executives of both sides should be imprisoned for creating a false narrative to try to circumvent established guidance to prevent this exact scenario.

Signed,

A concerned, well-informed Oregonian

2. 4/27/2026

Please do NOT grant an "Emergency Exemption" to Asante for the purpose of purchasing the Surgery Center in Medford, Oregon.

Asante is withholding information from the OHA and the public. Asante tried to withhold information about all the deaths associated with the incidents involving the nurse who injected tap water into IVs. It is very concerning what else Asante is hiding from the public, the press and the OHA.

Asante must have the guardrails you place on this monster that has become a rogue medical facility.

Asante has quietly forced several independent medical providers to close their local practices by not renewing their office leases under the guise of stating that Asante needs the space. But, those spaces are still empty and we have a shortage of providers. Does this sound like Asante is making good choices for care of citizens here? Pushing out our doctors? Closing practices? We already wait months for appointments. Asante has become the monopoly of medical care in Jackson and Josephine counties. We, the citizens of the entire Rogue Valley, are all very concerned what is happening at Asante.

3. 4/28/2026

I don't think you should allow Asante to do anything with sharp objects. They are not even giving healthcare, they simply call the police and lie to my insurance company claiming they did things they never did.

Thanks,

Katie M Knutson

4. 4/28/2026

Hi, um, I am a resident of Medford in Southern Oregon and I am asking that you not grant Asante the emergency exemption of the HCMO review for the request to purchase the, um, Surgery Center of Southern Oregon because I believe that Asante should be, um, able to have follow-up reviews – ongoing – to ensure that they are providing access to, um, health care to all residents of all residents in Southern Oregon in an equitable fashion. Thank you so much.

5. 4/29/2026

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

My name is Gary Allen, and I am a community member residing in southern Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients. In a town serving such a wide geographic area for medical care, it's important maintain options and access to prevent unnecessary delay.

Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Gary Allen

6. 4/29/2026

Re: Support for Emergency Exemption – Asante and Surgery Center of Southern Oregon

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

I am a physician and have practiced medicine in Southern Oregon for more than 40 years. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients.

Most importantly, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Peter A. Grant, MD

7. 4/29/2026

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request involving Asante and Surgery Center of Southern Oregon.

I understand there has been public concern regarding this transition, particularly around the perception that changes in ownership will fundamentally alter the nature of care provided at the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon. While these concerns are understandable, they do not fully reflect the reality of what is being proposed.

One of the most important factors in maintaining the quality and character of any healthcare facility is its people. In this case, the physicians, nurses, and support staff who have built the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon's reputation for high-quality, patient-centered care will remain in place. These are the individuals who define the culture, uphold standards, and ensure that patients receive attentive and compassionate care every day.

Because the clinical and operational teams are staying intact, the core values and patient-focused culture that the community has come to trust will continue. Continuity of staff means continuity of care, experience, and expectations for patients and their families.

Additionally, alignment with Asante has the potential to strengthen the Surgery Center's ability to serve the community by improving access to resources, enhancing care coordination, and supporting long-term sustainability in an increasingly complex healthcare environment. Rather than diminishing what already works well, this partnership can reinforce it.

I believe it is important to look beyond assumptions about change and focus on the stability that will remain, particularly the dedicated professionals who are the heart of the organization. For these reasons, I strongly support approval of the emergency exemption request.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Claire Owens - very happily employed by Surgery Center of Southern Oregon since 2014

8. 4/29/2026

I am writing in support of the emergency exemption request between Asante and Surgery Center of Southern Oregon.

While I understand there has been some public concern regarding this transition, I believe much of that concern overlooks an important fact: the staff and culture within Surgery Center of Southern Oregon will remain intact. The team that has built a patient-focused, high-quality environment is staying in place, which means the values and care patients rely on will continue.

Supporting this exemption is about preserving access to care and protecting a vital community resource. Without this request moving forward, there is a real risk the

surgery center could close, which would negatively impact patients, staff, and the broader community.

For these reasons, I strongly support approval of this emergency exemption request.

Sincerely, Lauren Cook RN at SCSO

9. 4/29/2026

I am in support of the emergency exemption for Asante to purchase SCSO. I am one of many staff here that has felt uncertainty around the longevity of our jobs. This process has been dragged out, our hours cut, and budget cuts have left us feeling uneasy. Many of us have been looking for other jobs that may pay our bills. It would be nice to know whether or not we will have jobs next month. I urge HCMO to approve the emergency exemption and to think of the employees and their families. The amount of time this has taken is simply unacceptable.

Hannah Rogers

10. 4/29/2026

Oregon Health Authority

Health Care Market Oversight Program

Email: hcmo.info@oha.oregon.gov

Re: Support for Emergency Exemption – Asante and Surgery Center of Southern Oregon

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

My name is Jennifer Titus, RN I am a staff member and a community member residing in Southern Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients.

Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Titus, RN BSN

11. 4/29/2026

To whom it may concern,

I am an OR nurse who has been working in the Valley for 20 years. I spent my first 10 years in the OR at Providence Medford Medical Center and then came to the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon in January 2016 when my husband and 2 young kids needed me to have a better work/life balance. I have truly loved working at the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon because we have created a culture that is truly unique & hard to find. We actually enjoy working together, we support one another and believe in what we do. I believe this is reflected in our high patient satisfaction ratings.

I would love it if we could stay an independent Surgery Center that serves this community. Unfortunately, this is not an option any more. If Asante is granted this emergency acquisition, then we should be able to stay open & continue to provide excellent & affordable care to this community. I ask that this acquisition is allowed for the benefit of our wonderful staff & deserving community.

Thank you,

Larissa Whitney, RN, BSN, CNOR

12. 4/29/2026

I have been employed at SCSO for the past eight years. Throughout that time, this team has faced numerous challenges—and each time, we have persevered. However, with the current pressures of rising healthcare costs and declining reimbursement rates, and ensuring fair and sustainable compensation for staff, the pressure has increased significantly.

As this transaction approaches the nine-month mark without resolution or clear direction on how we will move forward, the uncertainty continues to grow. During this prolonged period, multiple challenges have emerged simultaneously. One challenge is that dedicated staff members are being forced to make difficult decisions about their future --leaving an organization that, since day one, has championed work-life balance, exceptional patient care, and a truly unparalleled culture.

These departures inevitably diminish our capacity to care for the patients who rely on us. The on-going uncertainty also makes it challenging to recruit and retain high-quality staff. Maintaining access to quality medical care for our community is essential—and preserving that access must remain a top priority.

For those concerned about the future of SCSO and its longstanding reputation as a well-regarded facility, those concerns are valid and shared. Preserving the strength of our team, the integrity of our culture, and our commitment to high quality patient care remains at the forefront for us. Moving forward, we need clear direction, stability, and a focus on long-term sustainability of the organization so that we can continue to serve our patients and community without interruption.

For that reason, I support this emergency exemption.

Shana Vos RN

Proud SCSO employee since 2018

13. 4/29/2026

Dear HCMO Program Staff,

My name is Paige, and I am an Endoscopy Technician at the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients. Without this purchase, SCSO will close and that is the worst possible outcome for our community. Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from the rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Paige Goldate

Medford Oregon

14. 4/29/2026

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

My name is Jessika Smith and I am a staff member of SCSO residing in southern Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients.

Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Jessika Smith

Medford, OR

15. 4/29/2026

Oregon Health Authority

Health Care Market Oversight Program

Email: hcmo.info@oha.oregon.gov

Re: Support for Emergency Exemption – Asante and Surgery Center of Southern Oregon

Dear HCMO Staff:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments regarding Asante's intended acquisition of the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon. I have practiced neurosurgery in Medford, OR since 2013, and have been a provider at both the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO) and Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center throughout my tenure. I am an independent self-employed practitioner, and believe that our valley benefits greatly from both institutions. When I think about my home community, one of the aspects I value most is access to medical institutions with exceptional capabilities and with local governance. I strongly support the emergency exemption request from the parties above.

SCSO has historically provided high quality outpatient medical services at low cost to residents of Southern Oregon and the surrounding areas. I especially note that the center adapted and maintained services during the COVID crisis, is a valued employer, and provides multidisciplinary surgical and procedural services. SCSO serves a broad community beyond Medford and Jackson County. Unfortunately, new challenges and uphill circumstances could not be mitigated, and the headwinds have been too great. The center is at risk of imminent insolvency. This puts local services, institutional culture, local investiture, employment for numerous staff, and local medical expertise at risk.

Asante is the logical partner to assume and continue SCSO's good work. Asante has proven adaptable, is the local regional flagship for referral services across 9+ counties and growing communities, and is best poised to navigate the center to sustainability. This acquisition is critical to ensure that our patients maintain access to crucial services, the employees of SCSO retain their jobs, and that local expertise and governance both stay local. The challenges to rural and underserved populations, now more than ever, are not to be underestimated. Asante is the best and most appropriate steward to continue the values and mission of SCSO.

I humbly and respectfully urge the OHA to approve this exemption for the good of our patients and our community. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr Timothy Uschold

Southern Oregon Neurosurgery

Medford, OR

16. 4/30/2026

To Whom It May Concern-

I am writing to the HCMO group in support of allowing Asante to utilize the emergency exception for the acquisition of the Southern Oregon Surgery Center (SCSO).

SCSO has been the largest and most important local ambulatory surgery center in our region for the past 25 years. Over my 15 year career as a gastroenterologist in Medford, it has provided an incredible environment for my patients to receive safe, cost effective endoscopic procedures. The employees of SCSO are outstanding, and take great pride in their work, and I frequently hear from my patients that there is no other place they would prefer to go for their care.

Unfortunately, due to multiple factors outside the control of SCSO and its employees, this extremely important resource is threatened. Without immediate support from Asante, the only significant health care system in our region, SCSO may close within the next 2 months. That would mean that every patient currently receiving endoscopic care in the ambulatory setting would need to be scheduled to a hospital endoscopic department, in many cases tripling the associated facility fees.

Asante and SCSO have attempted to use the standard pathway through the HCMO process, but at this point, there is no longer time to complete this without SCSO closing due to financial realities. I ask that the waiver allowing the emergency exception be granted so we have an opportunity to preserve this very important community resource which provides excellent jobs to our local community in addition to the safest, most cost effective healthcare in our region.

Dr Adam Mougey

Gastroenterologist

17. 4/30/2026

Oregon Health Authority

Health Care Market Oversight Program

Email: hcmo.info@oha.oregon.gov

Re: Support for Emergency Exemption – Asante and Surgery Center of Southern Oregon

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

My name is David H. Walker, MD, and I am a surgeon residing in southern Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients.

Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

I have been performing surgeries in the valley for over 20 years and many of those proudly spent providing services at the SCSO. They provide excellent care on an outpatient basis across many specialties. This service is available no where else in the region. Unfortunately, the center has been hit with hard financial times and the way in which it can survive as such is a sale. Asante is an excellent health care partner in the valley and keeping ownership local is very important to myself; sale to outside national cooperations is strongly undesirable.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay as the center's viable time is very limited.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

David H. Walker, MD

Medford, OR

Proudly serving the valley for over 20 years.

18. 4/30/2026

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

I am a born-and-raised southern Oregonian, currently serving as both a staff member and community member. I have been employed at SCSO for the past 15+ years. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

The uncertainty surrounding this situation is extremely concerning and not sustainable. It has been deeply painful to watch so many team members leave — a loss that creates a domino effect throughout our organization. If we continue losing team members, we will no longer be able to adequately support our patients and community. Equally troubling is the toll on those who remain: staff are absorbing additional roles and working tirelessly to preserve the remarkable, family-like culture that SCSO has built. We are a team unlike any other. The team we have cultivated together prioritizes patient care above all else, and we support one another each day so that we can, in turn, support the community we serve

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante — ensuring uninterrupted access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients. Critically, this will help preserve an essential access point for those in rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our staff and community,

Paula Day, Proud SCSO employee since 2010

19. 4/30/2026

Dear HCMO Program Staff,

I am writing in support of the Emergency Exemption Application between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon through the Health Care Market Oversight program.

As a born and raised Southern Oregon native, and now as a registered nurse working at both Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon, I have seen firsthand how important local access to care is for our community. This region includes many rural and underserved areas, and patients often rely on local outpatient services to receive timely care without the added financial, travel, and logistical burdens of seeking treatment elsewhere.

The Surgery Center of Southern Oregon was established to serve as a vital community resource, providing accessible same-day surgical procedures, endoscopies, and pain management services in an outpatient setting. Its purpose has always been to offer patients a high-quality, cost-effective alternative to inpatient facilities for routine and lower-acuity procedures.

Approval of this emergency exemption is critical to preserving the continued availability of these outpatient services for the region. Maintaining local access to same-day procedures, specialty care, and pain management is especially important for patients living in surrounding rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to protecting healthcare access for Oregon communities.

Sincerely,

Krupa Patel, MBA, BSN, RN, FNP-S

20. 4/30/2026

Oregon Health Authority

Health Care Market Oversight Program Email: hcmo.info@oha.oregon.gov

Re: Support for Emergency Exemption – Asante and Surgery Center of Southern Oregon

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

My name is Carmen Fuhriman and I am a Medical Assistant residing in southern Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients.

Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Carmen Fuhriman, CCMA

Medford, Oregon

21. 4/30/2026

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

My name is Sara, and I am a staff member and community member residing in Southern Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients.

Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Sara Postma

Gold Hill, OR

22. 4/30/2026

Oregon Health Authority

Health Care Market Oversight Program

Email: hcmo.info@oha.oregon.gov

Re: Support for Emergency Exemption – Asante and Surgery Center of Southern Oregon

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

My name is Karen Cardenas and I am an employee of Asante Physicians Partner Gastroenterology residing in Southern Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients.

Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Karen Cardenas

Central Point, OR

23. 4/30/2026

Template Letter of Support

April 30, 2026

Oregon Health Authority

Health Care Market Oversight Program

Email: hcmo.info@oha.oregon.gov

Re: Support for Emergency Exemption – Asante and Surgery Center of Southern Oregon

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

My name is Amber Johnson, and I am an Asante staff member residing in southern Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients.

Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Amber E. Johnson

Pronouns (she/hers)

Patient Scheduling Coordinator

Asante Physician Partners Gastroenterology

24. 4/30/2026

Oregon Health Authority

Health Care Market Oversight Program Email: hcmo.info@oha.oregon.gov

Re: Support for Emergency Exemption – Asante and Surgery Center of Southern Oregon

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

My name is Debra Beall, and I am a staff member residing in Southern Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients.

Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Debra Beall

Medford, OR 97504

25. 4/30/2026

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

My name is Sophie Duran, and I am a community member and administrative medical staff residing in southern Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients.

Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Sophie

Medford, Oregon

26. 4/30/2026

Re: Support for Emergency Exemption – Asante and Surgery Center of Southern Oregon

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

My name is Sophie Duran, and I am an Asante staff member and community member residing in southern Oregon. I am writing to express my **strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).**

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients.

Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Sophie Duran

Medford Oregon

27. 4/30/2026

Amber Walters submitted a [letter](#) regarding the 061 Asante – SCSO request for emergency proposal.

28. 4/30/2026

Oregon Health Authority

Health Care Market Oversight Program

Email: hcmo.info@oha.oregon.gov

Re: Support for Emergency Exemption – Asante and Surgery Center of Southern Oregon

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

My name is Iryna Kulyk, and I am a DNP GI provider residing in southern Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients.

Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Iryna Kulyk

Medford, OR

29. 4/30/2026

Oregon Health Authority

Health Care Market Oversight Program Email: hcmo.info@oha.oregon.gov

Re: Support for Emergency Exemption – Asante and Surgery Center of Southern Oregon

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

My name is Donna Wilson, and I am a staff member residing in Southern Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients.

Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Donna Wilson

Medford, Oregon

30. 4/30/2026

I am deeply concerned about the decision to shutter Ashland Hospital's (AACH) inpatient beds. without community input. Asante is breaking its 2013 contract with the City of Ashland, which stated AACH will remain a general hospital through 2028. The current plan is to close the birth center on May 10th and stop taking inpatient admissions on or around May 4th. There is already a shortage on inpatient beds in the Rogue Valley and the loss of AACH's 48 beds puts the community at risk. Patients already are having to travel as far as Springfield or Portland to receive care.

I understand healthcare is a business. I attended a roundtable meeting with Asante Administration. They claim AACH is underutilized. on recent visits to the medical-

surgical wing, I observed about 90% of beds filled. They claim the birth center is underutilized by the community, when in fact I hear reports of patients traveling from the coast and Northern California to use AACH birth center. Asante claims they are losing money by keeping AACH open, yet somehow they have the cash to build new wings to RRMC and now are moving to buy the Medford Surgical Center, pushing it through as an emergency where none exists.

I ask you to scrutinize the decisions Asante is making. They are putting the health and well being of the Ashland community and beyond at risk.

Thank you,

Lynn Getzoff RN

31. 4/30/2026

Oregon Health Authority

Health Care Market Oversight Program Email: hcmo.info@oha.oregon.gov

Re: Support for Emergency Exemption – Asante and Surgery Center of Southern Oregon

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

My name is Tajma Gordon CMA, and I am a Certified Medical Assistant residing in Southern Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients.

Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Tajma Gordon CMA

Medford/OR

32. 4/30/2026

Oregon Health Authority

Health Care Market Oversight Program Email: hcmo.info@oha.oregon.gov

Re: Support for Emergency Exemption – Asante and Surgery Center of Southern Oregon

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

My name is Serena Medina, and I am a staff member and a member of this community residing in Southern Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients. Especially high-risk like cancer patients and our dear elderly patients that experience difficulty swallowing as they age causing choking hazards or barely be able to eat.

Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care. As well as the increasing gas, food and rent prices that is causing an already financial difficulty for low-income and rural patients in our community.

Health insurance companies already impose challenges in approving procedures when its Hospital setting only. They require reasons for having to have the colon/EGD procedures at a hospital setting or they won't approve them or take longer to approve them than it would to have at a surgery center.

This is going to cause a trickle-down effect to the people in our community when health insurance is going to charge more for procedures at the hospital. Not to mention the mural of the community for losing an important need that benefits us all.

I know there is going to be an increase of population in our community as time goes on, especially with the plan of a new sports stadium and hotels in our downtown area, not the time to be losing an important need to a growing community.

I respectfully urge and implore the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption

application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Serena Medina

Central Point, Oregon

33. 4/30/2026

Jamie Anderson submitted a [letter](#) regarding the 061 Asante – SCSO request for emergency proposal.

34. 4/30/2026

Oregon Health Authority

Health Care Market Oversight Program

Email: hcmo.info@oha.oregon.gov

Re: Support for Emergency Exemption – Asante and Surgery Center of Southern Oregon

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

My name is Miroslav P Bobek, MD, and I am a neurosurgeon residing in Medford and actively practicing neurosurgery in southern Oregon since 2002. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO). I have practiced at Asante for all of those 24 years, and at SCSO for 19 of those years.

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients.

Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care. Asante is a locally run organization with the ongoing goal of providing care to Southern Oregonians. I fear that should this exemption not be approved, SCSO will face imminent closure, and our underserved population will need to obtain outpatient surgical services in a hospital setting, only increasing cost and decreasing access to care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Miroslav P Bobek, MD

Southern Oregon Neurosurgery

Medford, OR

35. 4/30/2026

Dr. Tina Rutar submitted a [letter](#) regarding the 061 Asante – SCSO request for emergency proposal.

36. 4/30/2026

Oregon Health Authority

Health Care Market Oversight Program

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

My name is Carrie Lehto and I am a RN **staff member** who has worked at SCSO for 26 years and reside in Southern Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients.

Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Carrie Lehto

RN SCSO

Medford, OR

37. 4/30/2026

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

I am the state representative for House District 6 in the Oregon Legislature. Both Asante's Rogue Regional Medical Center and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon are in my district. I remember well when the surgery center was built, and the community's positive response to it. I have also watched Asante grow to fit our community, and I am incredibly proud to represent the people and the community that has made it happen.

I am writing to express my strong support for approval of the acquisition by Asante of the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

I was present for the floor consideration of both HB 3076 (2019) and HB 2362 (2021) which created the HCMO process. The stated purpose of the legislation was to ensure patients and communities have a voice when significant health care transactions occur, with a focus on protecting access to care, affordability, quality and equity. The proposed acquisition of SCSO by Asante is precisely the type of transaction that should be promptly approved or granted an emergency exemption.

I truly believe that this transaction presents no, or at worst minimal, risk to the factors outlined in the HCMO statute and rules. Competition drives access, affordability, quality, and equity in all markets, and SCSO has offered all of those benefits over the past 29 years. Now, however, the doctors who operated it no longer have capacity or interest in maintaining its operation. SCSO has sought other buyers, but only Asante has expressed interest. Without this acquisition, the center will almost certainly close and eliminate a large quantity of local surgical capacity at a time when our need for it is growing.

In addition, closing SCSO will damage affordability at a time when Oregonians are struggling with rising costs. Despite real advantages that can be gained from competition, because of the very real risk of closure, denying this acquisition will likely increase costs, the exact opposite outcome the law contemplated.

SCSO is only a short distance across the street from the hospital, making any rare transfers to the hospital extremely safe and quick. Ownership by the hospital will allow even better coordination of care and preserve timely access to outpatient surgical services for patients in my region. This deal has the potential to increase the quality of care with little risk that quality will be reduced.

Finally, Medford is the hub for a very remote and rural part of the state. Many people from underserved communities in Jackson, Klamath, Lake, Josephine, Curry and other counties travel to and rely on the medical services offered here. Closure of SCSO will only further delay and disrupt travel and health outcomes for many more people than only those residing in Medford.

The review process for this transaction began in August of 2025. Delaying this acquisition further serves no apparent community or patient benefit and risks causing the exact outcome the legislation sought to avoid: disruption of care delivery due to procedural hurdles rather than substantive concerns. Either prompt approval or emergency exemption is appropriate to allow the continuation of these services under stable ownership.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share a bit of the flavor of our local area, and for considering the needs of our community. I am available anytime for further discussion if you would find it helpful.

Sincerely,

Representative Kim Wallan

38. 4/30/2026

Oregon Health Authority

Health Care Market Oversight Program

Email: hcmo.info@oha.oregon.gov

Re: Support for Emergency Exemption – Asante and Surgery Center of Southern Oregon

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

My name is Analisa, and I am a staff member residing in Southern Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients.

Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Analisa Girard

Medford, Oregon

39. 4/30/2026

Oregon Health Authority

Health Care Market Oversight Program Email: hcmo.info@oha.oregon.gov

Re: Support for Emergency Exemption – Asante and Surgery Center of Southern Oregon

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

My name is Alexandra and I am a Patient Service Representative at Gastroenterology residing in southern Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

A vast number of patients that we see here at Gastroenterology express to our staff their appreciation for our three GI specialist doctors who spend a vast majority of their time doing procedures for the people of our community at the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon, and time and time again our patients express that they only want their procedures done by our physicians, and that they have had good experiences at the Surgery Center. Patients have come from as far north as Salem, as far south as Shasta Trinity and Humboldt counties in California, as far west as up and down the Oregon coast, and as far east as Lake county because they prefer to have their procedures done by our physicians at the Surgery Center.

Additionally, my personal experiences at the Surgery Center have always been positive. The staff, anesthesiologists, medical assistants, physicians, and surgeons have all always been professional but also kind and helped to create a relaxed atmosphere before during and after the multiple procedures and surgeries that I have had done, which I especially appreciate as I am a young person who experiences anxiety around procedures and surgeries. Me and my family members also have had good experiences at Asante facilities, and I am convinced that it will have a positive impact on our community to have Asante merge with the Surgery Center.

The Rogue Valley is growing exponentially, and it is imperative that we continue to have good medical facilities like the Surgery Center. Asante has proved to be very supportive to our office before, during and since the time of our office merging with Asante so I am convinced they would be as supportive to the Surgery Center staff.

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients.

Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Alexandra N.

40. 4/30/2026

Oregon Health Authority

Re: Support for Emergency Exemption – Asante and Surgery Center of Southern Oregon

Dear HCMO Program Staff,

My name is Sherri McFarland, and I am a Registered Nurse at the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO). In my role, I have seen firsthand the critical importance of maintaining access to safe, efficient, and timely surgical care within our community. SCSO plays a vital role in ensuring patients receive the care they need without unnecessary delays.

Without this acquisition, there are serious concerns about SCSO's ability to remain a solvent and sustainable organization moving forward. Losing this resource would be a significant disservice to the rural and underserved populations across Southern Oregon and Northern California who rely on timely, local surgical care.

SCSO is highly regarded throughout our community because of the compassionate staff and the personalized care each patient receives. Our team truly embodies a family-centered approach, ensuring that every patient who walks through our doors feels like a priority and is genuinely cared for.

Each month, we hear from patients, physicians, and community partners that our facility stands apart because of the respect, attention, and quality of care provided. Our staff is deeply committed to continuing this level of service, and approval of this emergency exemption is essential to making that possible.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our community's needs.

Sincerely,

Sherri McFarland, RN

Surgery Center of Southern Oregon

41. 4/30/2026

To the Members of the OHA Oversight Board or Any included in the decision making of regarding this project,

Asante is in the process of closing general hospital services [overnight beds/staffing & maternity services] thereby depriving Ashland of its ONLY hospital.

WE DO NOT NEED ANOTHER SERVICE IN MEDFORD! The emergency is in Ashland, I would not vote for another service miles away. Do NOT let Asante get away with this.

There could have been many solutions to Asante financial concerns IF they had had the backbone to be transparent and engage with the Ashland Community in a timely manner.

WE NEED TO MAINTAIN HOSPITAL /MATERNITY SERVICES IN THE CITY OF ASHLAND!

JoAnn Sustrick

42. 4/30/2026

Oregon Health Authority

Health Care Market Oversight Program

Email: hcmo.info@oha.oregon.gov

Re: Support for Emergency Exemption – Asante and Surgery Center of Southern Oregon

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

My name is Caitlin Valencia and I am a staff member residing in Southern Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients.

Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Caitlin Valencia,

Medford, Oregon

43. 4/30/2026

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

My name is Hannah Marchant-Rogers and I am a SCSO Nurse residing in southern Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients.

Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Hannah Marchant-Rogers

44. 4/30/2026

My name is JoAnn Sustrick and I am calling regarding Asante's emergency request in Medford for the surgery center. Don't let them get away with it. I live in Ashland. They're closing the hospital here. I don't want another service that's 35 miles away – please don't let them get away with this. They tried to sneak this hospital out of the community, allowing us to have no hospital here and boutique services aren't going to cut it. My name is JoAnn Sustrick and my phone number is [Confidential per ORS 192.377]. Thank you.

45. 4/30/2026

To who it may concern,

I am writing to offer my support for the emergency exemption request involving Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon.

There has been understandable concern within the community about potential changes tied to this transition. However, from my experience working at the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon over the past four years, I believe those concerns may not fully reflect the reality of what is happening internally. The team that delivers care every day—the nurses, techs, and support staff—will remain in place. That consistency is what truly defines the patient experience and the culture of the center.

What makes this facility exceptional is the people who work here and the pride they take in providing attentive, patient-focused care. That foundation is not changing. Instead, this transition presents an opportunity to maintain what already works well while potentially strengthening operational support and long-term stability.

Having been part of this organization, I can personally attest to the positive environment and the dedication to patients that exists here. I am confident those qualities will continue moving forward.

For these reasons, I respectfully support approval of the emergency exemption request.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Samantha Husen

46. 4/30/2026

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

My name is Peter William Adesman MD and I am a gastroenterologist on staff at Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center residing in Southern Oregon. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients.

Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and under served communities who depend on timely, local care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Peter Adesman MD

47. 4/30/2026

Dear HCMO Program Staff,

As a resident of Southern Oregon, I am writing to express my full support for the emergency exemption request involving Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Our community depends on the Surgery Center for essential outpatient care. Granting this exemption will ensure that services remain uninterrupted during the transition to Asante, preventing backlogs that could jeopardize patient outcomes. For many in our rural and underserved areas, this facility is a primary link to necessary surgical care; any delay in approval could create significant barriers to access.

I strongly encourage the Oregon Health Authority to approve this request promptly to ensure our local healthcare infrastructure remains intact.

Best regards,

Erika Zepeda

48. 4/30/2026

Dear HCMO Program Staff,

I am writing as a resident in Southern Oregon to advocate for the immediate approval of the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Prompt approval is essential to:

Maintain Continuity: Ensures outpatient surgical services remain available without interruption.

Protect Patients: Reduces the risk of care delays during the transition period.

Support Equity: Preserves local access for rural and underserved residents who cannot easily travel for care.

I urge the Oregon Health Authority to consider the pressing needs of Southern Oregonians and approve this application without delay.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Pedro Zepeda

49. 4/30/2026

I am protesting Asante's request for an emergency exemption. Asante made the decision to shutter general hospital services at the Ashland Community Hospital this Spring. This decision was made without community input. As an Ashland resident and health care provider I wanted to understand the reason for this decision. I read the Asante Impact information on the Asante website, the Lund Report, OHA website statistics on census and finances and local news articles. I also attended a round table meeting with Asante Administration about the decision. I know that our state will be impacted by a decrease in federal funding. I am still confused and troubled by the information I have been given. Asante claims that the Ashland facility lost money last year but this fact has been disputed. They claim that Medicare reimbursement in a community with 33% seniors is inadequate to support a hospital. They also mentioned a restrictive regulatory environment. It was never mentioned that Asante was trying to purchase Southern Oregon Surgery Center during this same period. As a nonprofit hospital Asante has been getting tax benefits from our Ashland Community. This tax benefit comes with responsibilities. There is an agreement with the City of Ashland to provide general hospital services until 2028. It appears that they are cherry picking lucrative outpatient surgery patients over vulnerable seniors in Ashland. The decision to close the birthing, inpatient and specialty services is breaking a contract and impacting a community which has had a hospital for 119 years. I appreciate the careful scrutiny that HCMO provides in our state to look at patient impact with mergers and acquisitions. I don't see the the need for an emergency exemption with the sale of the Southern Oregon Surgery Center. I see a business trying to to side step the review process and not act responsibly. I urge HCMO to continue the deliberative process and not treat this as an emergency.

Lauri Hoagland

50. 4/30/2026

I have worked in the medical field here in Southern Oregon for over 25 years. I have lived here all my life. I have a personal vested interest in not only my own medical care, but also those of every patient that walks through our clinic doors.

I have worked closely with the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon long before I became a part of Asante. I have seen the numerous patients that they have treated and personally know some of the employees that have worked hard to provide stellar patient care there.

Now these patients are faced with a potential roadblock to their nonhospital based care with the impending closure of the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon. Not all cases are appropriate to be done in a hospital setting and many insurances are pushing that they will not pay for care if there is not a medical reason that the care needs to be done within a hospital setting.

Also having more non urgent cases being sent to the hospital takes room away for treating the patients that HAVE to be seen at the hospital due to more severe medical histories. Having an ambulatory surgical center within the Asante umbrella fills a vital need in our area. If the acquisition is not approved, it will certainly result in longer wait times for patient care and would be seen as OHP impeding patient care.

Then there is the employment aspect of the Surgery Center. Many highly trained and qualified people will be out of work through no fault of their own. They have dedicated their time and energy to try and keep the Surgery Center running smoothly while they don't know what their future holds.

If OHP blocks Asante moving forward with this acquisition it will have a far-reaching negative impact in our area which can and will be tracked back to OHP and will be seen as them impeding patient care in our area.

Sincerely,

Karyl Bost

Central Point, Oregon

51. 4/30/2026

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to share my support for the emergency exemption request involving Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon.

As a Certified Surgical Technologist who has worked at the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon for nearly six years, I have had a front-row view of the care our team provides and the culture we've built. Because of that, I feel it's important to speak to what actually defines this facility. The strength of this center comes from the people—our nurses, techs, and support staff—who show up every day committed to safe, patient-centered care. That team is not changing, and neither is the standard of care our patients receive.

From the inside, this transition does not feel like a loss of identity, but rather an opportunity to support and sustain what is already working well. The consistency of the staff, combined with potential added stability and resources, allows us to continue delivering the level of care our community expects and deserves.

This organization is more than just my place of employment—it's where I've grown professionally and where I hope to continue my career. As I work toward becoming a nurse, my goal is to return and serve this same patient population long-term.

Based on my experience and perspective, I believe approving this emergency exemption is the right decision.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jacie Gavin

52. 4/30/2026

As a nurse in this community and someone who currently works for SCSO and who has previously worked for Asante, I feel that the lengthy process of this transition has been excessive and unnecessary causing emotional strain on the staff doing our best to care for our community. Proceeding with this exemption will help not only our community in continued care but also continue to help provide jobs in the valley. Our goal, with the help of Asante, is to keep our culture which we have cultivated for years within our facility and give our patients a place to get procedures done in a safe and comfortable environment. Please be swift and understanding of those affected by this decision.

Shania Duerksen

53. 5/1/2026

Kate Wagner submitted a [letter](#) regarding the 061 Asante – SCSO request for emergency proposal.

54. 5/1/2026

Oregon Health Authority

Health Care Market Oversight Program

Re: Support for Emergency Exemption – Asante and Surgery Center of Southern Oregon

Dear HCMO Program Staff:

My name is Brenda Nelson, and I have been very happily employed at the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon since 2006. I am writing to express my strong support for the emergency exemption request between Asante and the Surgery Center of Southern Oregon (SCSO).

Approval of this emergency exemption will support the continued availability of outpatient surgical services and enable a smooth transition to Asante, ensuring continued access to care and reducing the risk of delays for patients.

Critically, this will help provide an access point to those from rural and underserved communities who depend on timely, local care.

I respectfully urge the Oregon Health Authority to approve the emergency exemption application without delay.

Thank you for considering the needs of our community.

Brenda Nelson

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 contact HCMO staff:

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