

## 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 079 Salem Health – Santiam. 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. 4/16/2026

I don't believe this should be allowed - Salem Health has been eating up all the clinics in the area and is becoming a monopoly. Further, they are not currently operating at a level that accounts for the population in the area. They have insufficient staff and insufficient equipment (CT Scans, MRI, PET, etc.) to meet the needs of the population they currently serve. As they take over other clinics, they have removed equipment in those clinics meaning less equipment is available. Their plans are to centralize everyone and while that may be a good business decision, it does not meet the needs of the people in Marion and Polk counties. They are delaying treatment because of these business decisions and patients have suffered because of it. Residents of Marion and Polk counties should have more options to choose from and not be limited to Salem Health.

### 2. 4/17/26

I receive my care at Salem Health , and I wanted to share why the partnership between Salem Health and Santiam matters to me. In my experience, both organizations have played an important role in supporting the health of our community. The idea of them working together feels like a meaningful step toward strengthening local access to care.

From my perspective as a patient, collaboration between health systems can create more stability, expand services, and help ensure that high-quality care remains available close to home. I value the teams who have cared for me, and I appreciate efforts that help them continue providing excellent service.

Thank you for considering my comments as part of the public review process.

### **3. 4/17/2026**

My family and I have received care at both Salem Health and Santiam. I grew up in Stayton and since moving back in 2021 to raise our family, we have had 3 ER visits at Santiam with excellent care. In that same timeframe, I have had two emergency c-sections at Salem Health. I truly believe my family is here today due to the care we received at both organizations. I believe that this partnership will allow Stayton residents to continue receiving excellent care and open the doors to easier access to care in Salem and additional services.

### **4. 4/17/2026**

I personally receive care at Salem Hospital, West Valley Hospital as well as a Salem Health Clinic and I always receive great care at all of the locations. I am writing to express my full support for the proposed partnership between Santiam Hospital and Salem Health.

This collaboration represents an important step forward in ensuring that residents of the Santiam Canyon and the Mid-Willamette Valley continue to have access to high-quality, local healthcare.

Salem Health has already demonstrated a deep commitment to rural healthcare through its investment in West Valley Hospital. That partnership allowed for expanded bed capacity from 6 to 25, increased staffing (more jobs), and brought in new specialty services—including wound care, infusion, and orthopedic rehabilitation—directly to the

Dallas community. I think that this shows that something like that can also be achieved at Santiam.

Independent health systems like Santiam face significant headwinds, including but not limited to financial pressure due to federal funding reductions (Medicaid). By joining forces, Santiam can leverage the resources of a larger system to stabilize its operations and ensure that local governance and community values remain at the heart of healthcare delivery.

Salem Health has already proven to be a steady, reliable partner that prioritizes local care delivery. I believe this partnership will create a more stable, robust healthcare system that is better equipped to serve the people of Marion and Linn counties for decades to come.

#### **5. 4/20/2026**

Salem Health has become a monopoly here. This should not be approved until they have a contract with all insurance companies and agree to arbitration if they have issues again and no ability to drop any insurance coverage since they are a monopoly

#### **6. 4/21/2026**

I would like to ask for this merger not to happen. Very few clinics accept blue cross blue shield enough as it is. Having a hospital close by for emergency and ease of scheduling has been a big help .

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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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