

Public Comments

018 Optum & The Corvallis Clinic

This document includes written public comments related to the review of transaction 018 Optum & The Corvallis Clinic by Oregon Health Authority (OHA) under the [Health Care Market Oversight](#) program. OHA received written public comment via email to hcmo.info@oha.oregon.gov. 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.

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Public Comments

300. Subject: OPTUM/UNITED HEALTH CARE

Received 1/22/24

In what world would the largest health insurance company, driven by profit, in the USA, be the best choice to own a medical clinic in Corvallis, Oregon or anywhere in Oregon? My personal belief is there shouldn't be profits to be made in most of the medical care arena. Optum should not be allowed to buy the Corvallis Clinic--it would be harmful to the members of the Corvallis community.

Christina Pasillas

Klamath Falls, Oregon

301. Subject: Optum takeover

Received 1/22/24

HCMO,

Please do not approve the "merger" of Optum and The Corvallis Clinic.

I reviewed Optum's Notice of Material Change Transaction, and it makes a lot of wonderful promises. Optum is not to be trusted. In fact, we can trust Optum to break those promises. Optum is owned by the massive corporation UnitedHealth Group. Disturbingly, this fact was redacted in the pre- and post-transaction Organization Charts in Appendix C: Responses to Supplemental Information Request, but I think at this point everyone knows who Optum is owned by. As a publicly traded corporation, UnitedHealth is legally obligated to make decisions that benefit its shareholders, not patients. Their fiduciary responsibility, by law, is to their shareholders. To live up to the promises in their application would be a violation of this. When (not if) they have to choose between patient care and profits, which do you think they'll choose? They must choose

profits over people, but as HCMO you can choose people over UnitedHealth's profits by not approving this merger.

Optum/UnitedHealth is harmful to patients, that's not just some idealistic viewpoint that corporations are evils, it is provable fact. UnitedHealth has a disgusting history of being deceptive and untrustworthy, to the point of fraud. This is not something that needs innuendo or implication, there is a long list of their deceptions and frauds. A few minutes on Google reveals many dozens of incidents. I am including a small subset of those below, in the form of news articles. These are not just a bunch of articles about one scandal, they are articles about many different scandals. To hope that Optum/UnitedHealth will live up to the promises in their application is naive, and will do significant harm to our state.

- [UnitedHealth sued by US Labor Department over 'thousands' of claims denials](https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/payers/unitedhealth-sued-us-labor-department-over-claims-denials)
(<https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/payers/unitedhealth-sued-us-labor-department-over-claims-denials>)
- [UnitedHealth faces class action lawsuit over algorithmic care denials in Medicare Advantage plans](https://www.statnews.com/2023/11/14/unitedhealth-class-action-lawsuit-algorithm-medicare-advantage/)
(<https://www.statnews.com/2023/11/14/unitedhealth-class-action-lawsuit-algorithm-medicare-advantage/>)
- [Insider UnitedHealth's Effort to Deny Coverage for a Patient's Care](https://www.propublica.org/article/unitedhealth-healthcare-insurance-denial-ulcerative-colitis)
(<https://www.propublica.org/article/unitedhealth-healthcare-insurance-denial-ulcerative-colitis>)
- [DOJ Sues UnitedHealth for \\$1B Thanks to Whistleblower](https://www.whistleblowerattorneys.com/blog/whistleblower-unitedhealth-medicare-advantage-fraud)
(<https://www.whistleblowerattorneys.com/blog/whistleblower-unitedhealth-medicare-advantage-fraud>)
- [U.S. Intervenes in 'Whistleblower' Case Alleging UnitedHealth Group Mischarged Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug Programs](https://www.justice.gov/usao-cdca/pr/us-intervenes-whistleblower-case-alleging-unitedhealth-group-mischarged-medicare)
(<https://www.justice.gov/usao-cdca/pr/us-intervenes-whistleblower-case-alleging-unitedhealth-group-mischarged-medicare>)
- [U.S. Intervenes in Second 'Whistleblower' Lawsuit Alleging UnitedHealth Mischarged the Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug Programs](https://www.justice.gov/usao-cdca/pr/us-intervenes-second-whistleblower-lawsuit-alleging-unitedhealth-mischarged-medicare)
(<https://www.justice.gov/usao-cdca/pr/us-intervenes-second-whistleblower-lawsuit-alleging-unitedhealth-mischarged-medicare>)

- [Audit](#)
[reveals millions in Medicare Advantage overcharges](#)
(<https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/payers/audits-hidden-until-now-reveal-millions-medicare-advantage-overcharges>)
- [UnitedHealth](#)
[Faces ERISA Suit Alleging Overcharging Scheme](#)
(<https://www.law360.com/articles/1560570>)
- [OptumRX](#)
[to pay \\$15 mln to settle Ohio's overcharging claims](#)
(<https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/optumrx-pay-15-mln-settle-ohios-overcharging-claims-2022-10-25/>)
- [UnitedHealthcare](#)
[is paying \\$15.6 million to settle mental health overcharge accusations](#)
(<https://www.healthcarefinancenews.com/news/unitedhealthcare-paying-156-million-settle-mental-health-overcharge-accusations>)
- [UnitedHealth](#)
[Accused of Overcharging for Drugs](#)
(<https://www.hcao.org/UnitedHealth%20Accused%20of%20Overcharging%20for%20Drugs>)
- [Health](#)
[insurer accused of overcharging millions](#)
(<https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/health-insurer-accused-overcharging-millions-flna1c9453697>)
- Louisiana sues UnitedHealthcare,
OptumRx for alleged Medicaid drug overcharging
(<https://www.modernhealthcare.com/legal/louisiana-sues-unitedhealthcare-optumrx-alleged-medicaid-drug-overcharging>)
- UnitedHealthcare Pays
\$80,000 Settlement to HHS to Resolve HIPAA Matter over Patient Medical Records Request
(<https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2023/08/24/unitedhealthcare-pays-80000-settlement-hhs-resolve-hipaa-matter-patient-medical-records-request.html>)
- [UnitedHealthcare](#)
[Pays \\$91.2M After Underpaying Envision for Medical Care](#)
(<https://healthpayerintelligence.com/news/unitedhealthcare-pays-91.2m-after-underpaying-envision-for-medical-care>)

- [UnitedHealthcare loses legal battle against KKR-owned doctors group \(https://www.ft.com/content/6263861f-b054-4c77-8240-64d13348d771\)](https://www.ft.com/content/6263861f-b054-4c77-8240-64d13348d771)
- 'Deny, deny, deny': By rejecting claims, Medicare Advantage plans threaten rural hospitals and patients, say CEOs (<https://www.nbcnews.com/health/rejecting-claims-medicare-advantage-rural-hospitals-rcna121012>)
- [UnitedHealth's \\$324.2 Billion in revenue made it the largest Fortune 500 company in the health care sector. \(https://fortune.com/company/unitedhealth-group/fortune500/\)](https://fortune.com/company/unitedhealth-group/fortune500/)
- [UnitedHealth used secret rules to restrict rehab care for seriously ill Medicare Advantage patients \(https://www.statnews.com/2023/12/28/medicare-advantage-united-health-navihealth-rehab-care-restrictions\)](https://www.statnews.com/2023/12/28/medicare-advantage-united-health-navihealth-rehab-care-restrictions)
- "Cuomo Announces Industry-Wide Investigation into Health Insurer's Fraudulent Reimbursement Scheme" (http://www.oag.state.ny.us/press/2008/feb/feb13a_08.html)
- California high court won't review \$91M fine against UnitedHealthcare (<https://www.startribune.com/california-high-court-won-t-review-91m-fine-against-unitedhealthcare/503907322/>)
- UnitedHealthcare is fined \$2.5 million by New Jersey regulators (<http://www.startribune.com/unitedhealthcare-paying-2-5-million-fine-to-new-jersey-regulators/489675671/>)
- UnitedHealthcare assessed \$1 million penalty for claims payment violations (<https://www.startribune.com/unitedhealthcare-faces-1-million-penalty-for-claims-payment-violations/564370152/>)
- United to Pay TeamHealth \$60 million in Punitive Damages (<https://www.teamhealth.com/news-and-resources/press-release/nevada-trial-culminates-with-jury-ordering-unitedhealthcare-to-pay-teamhealth-doctors-60-million-in-punitive-damages/>)

Thank you for your consideration in this matter, and for not approving this takeover

Sincerely,

Deren Ash

302. Subject: Optum

Received 1/22/24

Whom it may concern,

As a Physician practicing in the Community Health Sector of Oregon Health care, I can tell you first hand American Health Care is a terribly broken system. In short it relies on more corporate maneuvering and very little compassion. Optum taking over more practices is NOT the answer.

Please stop their purchase of another practice. We need to focus on a National/State health care system that is the foundation of every other developed country where most are ranked far above ours at a lower cost.

Dr Matt Kingsbauer

303. Subject: Optum should not be allowed to take over the Corvallis Clinic

Received 1/22/24

I live in Seattle now but I lived in Corvallis from 1978 to 2008 and worked as a physical therapist. During that time I had many interactions with insurance companies. There was one insurance company that stood out for being completely unresponsive to patient needs — that was United Health, the owner of Optum. They did not respond to written communications and when I tried to call them about patient needs I could never get through to talk to a real person. To this day I am convinced that United Health has no interest in the welfare of there people it insures.

When I lived in Corvallis I was a patient at the Corvallis Clinic. It was a good and well run clinic. Please do not let any insurance company or private equity business take over the Corvallis Clinic.

Rich Lague

Seattle, WA

304. Subject: Optimum/United Health

Received 1/22/24

The effort to purchase local health care provider is mis guided entirely if care for Corvallis area residents is a priority. Please reject this effort and save quality health care in the MidWillamette Valley.

Bob Hannigan

305. Subject: Optum

Received 1/22/24

Oregon Health Authority HCMO:

I urge you to deny the takeover of the Corvallis Clinic by Optum Oregon MSO (United Healthcare.)

3/11/2024

Before my former Providence-associated clinic moved to a more business-oriented model, I was treated by a competent nurse, who gathered preliminary information, and a doctor, who evaluated my condition. After the new model had been initiated, I had to see an intake something-or-other, followed by another person to measure BP, etc., followed by a Physician's Assistant, who evaluated my condition and ordered tests, if needed. Eventually, I had a few minutes with my doctor (who I liked, but didn't see much of) to discuss the results. At every stage, I would find some information had been distorted or lost and I felt more like a statistical probability than a living, breathing, patient.

Health care can not be run as a business, with corporate mergers and hostile takeovers, without sacrificing the health and confidence of patients.

Thank you.

Katherine Showalter

Portland, OR

306. Subject: Optum

Received 1/22/24

We have been patients of the Corvallis Clinic since we moved here ten years ago, and we have been greatly satisfied with our relationship with them. We have dealt with physicians in many different departments as well as Immediate Care and have always found that the physicians and their staff were attentive to our particular, personal situations.

We have watched with horror as the healthcare industry has become more and more vertically integrated, leading to facility closures, short-staffing, focus on profit over the health care of individuals, and, in some cases, denial of critical treatment. Corporate driven health care serves neither patients nor the communities in which they live. It serves remote shareholders whose only concern is profit. Permitting Optum to take control of Corvallis Clinic will reduce local competition and the quality of medical care available in Corvallis. Optum and its parent company are already under investigation for a variety of legal and ethical violations, and we don't want them here, especially not if they will be in charge of our health care.

Please do not allow this takeover.

Ann Pemberton

Jonathan Lipman

Corvallis OR

307. Subject: OPTIMUM TAKEOVER

Received 1/22/24

HCMO:

I am writing to object sternly to the potential takeover of health care by Optimum. Managed care is just that:

MANAGED. That means controlled, less options for physicians in trying to deliver the very best care without barriers placed by a company interested in profits.

I practiced pediatric physical therapy for 40 years. Over and over again I witnessed insurance companies controlling choices and providing especially durable medical equipment

"choices" (such as wheelchairs) that did not fit the child. These poor choices had particularly frustrating results in alignment, posture, mobility and function in the school setting and at home. This is where parents go bankrupt trying to give what they know their child needs.

Do NOT let this happen. The Corvallis Clinic serving such a large geographic area needs to have providers unheeded by corporate greed.

Sincerely,

Christine Lentz

Physical Therapist (retired)

308. Subject: Corvallis CliniciC acquisition by OPTUM

Received 1/22/24

Gentlemen

I am writing about my concern of Optum's proposal to purchase the Corvallis Clinic. I am a retired Corvallis Clinic Physician, a patient of the Corvallis Clinic and a concerned citizen regarding the quality of health care in the mid

Willamette Valley.

My concerns are multifold.

United Health Group is an incorporated multinational health insurance and services group whose primary goal is to make a profit not deliver health care. The purchase of the Corvallis Clinic by Optum, one of two arms of United Health Group is a further corporatization of medicine where for care for patients is secondary to the goal of corporate profit .

When Oregon Medical Group in Springfield was purchased by Optum reportedly scheduled appointments were cut to half days for one plus months for a systems incorporation and some surgical specialists complained that equipment and supplies were reduced in quality. A physician reported that about 1/3 of the providers quit the clinic during the first year post purchase because of dissatisfaction with Optum policies.

United Health Care reported has complaints and suits because of denial and/or delay of referrals needed for further care and/or evaluation .

I am fearful that quality of health care provided at the Corvallis Clinic, the largest clinic in the mid valley, will be reduced, that the number of health care providers will decrease and overall quality of health care regionally will suffer.

Because the controlling interest of the Corvallis Clinic will be held by a huge DISTANT FINANCIAL ENTITY local control will be diminished, responsiveness local issues will likely be delayed, financial interests will be emphasized rather medical care.

United Health Care, the financial insurance arm of United Health Group is just that, an insurance company that gets money from medicare thus reducing funds for medicare programs NOT true medicare which has significantly lower overhead and is a care plan with universal coverage.

Please reject this proposal.

John Erkkila, M.D.

309. Subject: Optum/UnitedHealth acquisition of The Corvallis Clinic

Received 1/22/24

I do not trust a for-profit insurance corporation to own the medical practice I go to because their priority is to create profits, not to best serve patient needs. If United Health buys the Corvallis Clinic, I intend to abandon my primary care physician of 30 years and go elsewhere for my medical care.

Please do not permit this takeover to happen.

Thank you, Carol Cina

310. Subject: Optum

Received 1/22/24

No to Optum!

311. Subject: Proposed Optum Purchase of the Corvallis Clinic

Received 1/22/24

I strongly oppose the HCMO allowing The Corvallis Clinic to be acquired by Optum Health of the UnitedHealth Group.

As a profit-making enterprise that operates nationally, its primary objective is to increase profits, and its policies will be driven by interests outside Corvallis and outside Oregon. Those policies will not have improved health care services and reduction of denials of service as their primary goal, but obtaining more profit. The Good Samaritan Hospital will no longer contract with UnitedHealth because of prolonged delays in payment for services. This behavior by UnitedHealth has negative effects all along the line of delivery of health care services.

This acquisition will not only diminish the availability and quality of service, but will also increase costs to consumers. Resources that could be used for Corvallis and for Oregon will be siphoned off to some corporate headquarters. The interests of our State and local communities will be ignored.

The profit-seeking motives of this national outfit will not merely cause inconvenience for members of our community, they will also lead to greater suffering and worsened health outcomes. The United States, among advanced nations, has one of the worst records in health care outcomes and health status. This acquisition is not the way forward.

I therefore strongly urge HCMO not to approve the petition by Optum of UnitedHealth Group for acquisition of The Corvallis Clinic.

Sincerely,

D. Allen Meyer

Corvallis, Oregon

312. Subject: optum/UnitedHealth care.

Received 1/22/24

It's simple; it really needs to be about patient care.

Yes, there are profits to be made but that's not what matters.

Honestly, it is about life and death.

Please take it seriously.

Stop the profit driven take over in Corvallis.

Thank you for caring about care.

Gracie Campbell

313. Subject: OPTUM

Received 1/22/24

Instead of allowing Optum to take over the Corvallis Clinic, drive up their profits and drive down the quality of care, help the Corvallis Clinic maintain ownership by supporting them financially and seeing them through this crisis.

Tina Amorok

Corvallis

314. Subject: Optum/UnitedHealth acquisition of The Corvallis Clinic

Received 1/22/24

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

Re: Optum/UnitedHealth takeover of The Corvallis Clinic

We, the undersigned concerned Oregonians, oppose Optum/UnitedHealth taking over The Corvallis Clinic, especially without a comprehensive review. Our objections include the following concerns:

1. Corporate Interests vs. Public Health: Optum Oregon MSO is owned by UnitedHealth Group Inc., the largest healthcare corporation in the US. Its primary responsibility is to its shareholders, focusing on maximizing profits. This business model requires prioritizing financial gains over patient welfare.

2. Impact on Local Healthcare: UnitedHealth's record as the 10th largest corporation in the nation underscores its efficiency in generating profits. However, this comes at the cost of patient care.

The takeover of The Corvallis Clinic by such a corporation will lead to increased costs and reduced quality of care for Oregonians.

3. **Affordability and Accessibility Concerns:** The introduction of a mega-corporation like UnitedHealth in to our local healthcare landscape raises serious concerns about the affordability and accessibility of healthcare services. Experience and history proves that corporate takeovers lead to increased costs without improving quality of care.

4. **Distrust in Corporate Promises:** The statements provided by Optum Oregon MSO in their application are refuted by historical evidence. Corporate takeovers of healthcare, particularly by UnitedHealth, have not benefited public health as promised.

In light of these points, we urge the responsible authorities to consider the broader implications of this takeover on the health and well-being of Oregonians. We believe that healthcare should prioritize people over profits, and we strongly advocate against this takeover.

If more evidence is needed that Optum/UnitedHealth will not be able to live up to their promises, we believe it meets the criteria for conducting a comprehensive review under ORS 415.501, since there is certainly potential to have a negative impact on access to affordable care in Oregon, and it also meets the criteria for convening a Community Review Board.

Let's keep our healthcare local, accessible, and patient-centered. Please deny the takeover of The Corvallis Clinic by Optum/UnitedHealth, or conduct a comprehensive review with a Community Review Board if more evidence is needed.

Sincerely,

Roberta (Robin) Bouvette

The petition has closed to meet HCMO's deadline for written testimony. The petition was submitted to HCMO. THANK YOU to everyone who signed!

315. Subject: Optum

Received 1/22/24

Oregonians DO NOT want mega corporations taking over our health care. United Healthcare has a long history of fraud. Please do not let them into our community.

Ellen

316. Subject: OPTUM

Received 1/23/24

Please please don't let a mega corporation take over our local Corvallis Clinic. It would result in higher prices and lower quality of care. Keep Corvallis Clinic independent!

--Eve Chambers

317. Subject: Optum/UnitedHealth acquisition of The Corvallis Clinic

Received 1/23/24

To whom it may concern:

3/11/2024

We are extremely concerned about United healthcare acquiring the Corvallis Clinic. There is already a limited array of providers in the area and creating a monopoly that already has a negative reputation for access, cost, and quality of care is the last thing we need in the area. The Corvallis clinic has already sent a letter out to existing patients telling them that if they do not have a primary care provider through the clinic, they will not be able to access specialists within the clinic unless they already have a standing relationship with them. This sounds like malpractice , unethical behavior, and only the beginning of what is to come. For a society that seems so opposed to a single payer system that is run by the government, it seems like we are on the path to that same concept only with for-profit companies driving access.

As you are well aware, this is not the first Willamette Valley organization to be acquired by Optum in the recent past. You need only look as far south as Springfield to know that the Oregon Medical Group was also acquired by the same company. We have personally experienced enormous increases in costs of our health care there within the year that it was acquired. The clinicians are already concerned with changes that Optum is putting in place that directly impact their ability to provide care.

If it is within your ability to do so, we urgently plead that you prevent this acquisition. Instead, are there solutions that improve access to care, quality of care, and ethical behavior?

Sincerely

Elizabeth Lazaroff, MD and Dennis Lazaroff

318. Subject: Optum

Received 1/23/24

Does ANYONE really think a huge, profit-driven health care provider will be an improvement on the locally owned Corvallis Clinic?

My doctor is presently at Corvallis Clinic; I moved there from Samaritan because the latter proved poorly organized; from my wife's experience, it still is compared to Corvallis Clinic. Apparently that's expensive; CC also expanded too much. Perhaps they should be encouraged to subdivide. I don't pretend I know the best solution, but please:

Keep hyper-corporate "healthcare" out of Corvallis!

Charles Newlin

Corvallis, Oregon

319. Subject: Optum purchase of the Corvallis Clinic

Received 1/24/24

Hello

I strenuously oppose the sale of the Corvallis Clinic to Optum, a subsidiary of United Healthcare. This is a disaster for the people to rely on the clinic for their health as well as those employed by it. I am reminded of the 1980s when, after a devastating recession and businesses were struggling to regain their positions. After "deregulation" allowed corporate raiders to come in and buy up companies that would have been able to make better choices but were left without any choice but

to sell. What was the result? We lost choices, prices went up, employees saw wages stagnate and decline, they saw benefits decrease, and job security erode. Now, 40 years later we have the worst economic inequality in the western world. I fully expect that the Optum purchase will follow that pattern and would also follow the pattern of other healthcare buyouts that have already occurred around the country.

Oregon voters have made it clear they want to have health care as a right for our citizens. We must not allow a corporate raider to come in and negate that vote. We have great health care quality in the tri-county area. If we have Optum take over that will no longer be the case. Instead let's work for the single payer system the people of our state want

Thank you

Shelley Ries RN

320. Subject: Optum take over of Corvallis Clinic

Received 1/26/24

My husband and I have been Corvallis Clinic patients for many years. We are against the purchase of the clinic by Optum. We are concerned that costs will increase and health care quality will decrease, concerns that are supported by research. I understand that the Clinic was hit hard by the pandemic, but it seems like that should be addressed in a way that is not about maximizing profits for a private equity group.

Sincerely,

Jane Olson

Philomath, OR

321. Subject: OPTUM/TCC proposed consolidation

Received 1/27/24

I am opposed to the proposed consolidation of The Corvallis Clinic with OPTUM. I urge OHA/HCMO to do an assessment of the impact of the OPTUM/ EugeneOMG consolidation that occurred in 2022, before HCMO was operational. I experienced significant obstacles with OPTUM/EugeneOMG in getting my disabled son, an OHP patient, access to the healthcare he needed as he was experiencing a significant deterioration of his health. I had to seek access to healthcare in Multnomah county through OHSU. It would be important to know how many other patients in Lane County have been negatively impacted by that consolidation.

Below is a sampling of recent lawsuits from the state of New Jersey. There are many others from other states.

<https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2023/12/15/hhs-office-for-civil-rights-settles-multiple-hipaa-complaints-with-optum-medical-care-over-patient-access-to-records.html>

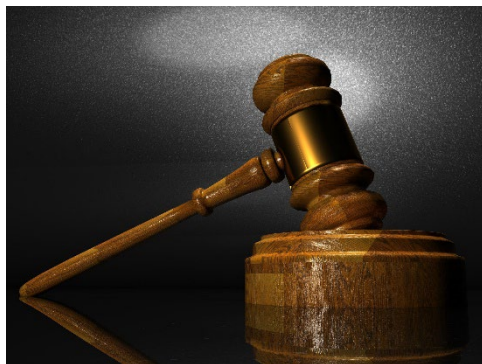


[HHS' Office for Civil Rights Settles Multiple HIPAA Complaints With Optum Medical Care Over Patient Access to Records](https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2023/12/15/hhs-office-for-civil-rights-settles-multiple-hipaa-complaints-with-optum-medical-care-over-patient-access-to-records.html)

Optum Medical Care OCR settlement

www.hhs.gov

<https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/payer/court-rips-up-optum-s-6b-prescription-drug-contract-rebid-ordered>



[New Jersey court rips up Optum's \\$6.7B prescription drug contract, orders rebid](https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/payer/court-rips-up-optum-s-6b-prescription-drug-contract-rebid-ordered)

A New Jersey appeals court has invalidated OptumRx's \$6.7 billion prescription drug management contract with the state, ruling the company violated bidding rules. | A New Jersey court has found that OptumRx's proposal to serve as PBM for 835,000 public workers violated bidding rules. Express Scripts, which brought about the suit, tells FierceHealthcare it's ready for a rebid.

www.fiercehealthcare.com

<https://www.nj.com/healthfit/2020/02/an-insurance-titan-is-dropping-hundreds-of-nj-physicians-to-enrich-itself-doctors-and-patients-charge.html>



[An insurance titan is dropping hundreds of N.J. physicians to enrich itself, doctors and patients charge](https://www.nj.com/healthfit/2020/02/an-insurance-titan-is-dropping-hundreds-of-nj-physicians-to-enrich-itself-doctors-and-patients-charge.html)

Longtime patients are being made to part with their doctors as United HealthCare directs them to a practice it owns.

www.nj.com

<https://www.healthcarefinancenews.com/news/unitedhealthcare-denies-forcing-new-jersey-members-use-optumcare-provider>



[UnitedHealthcare denies forcing New Jersey members to use OptumCare provider](https://www.healthcarefinancenews.com/news/unitedhealthcare-denies-forcing-new-jersey-members-use-optumcare-provider)

States where it operates Medicaid plans have asked for quality coverage while containing rising healthcare costs, insurer says.

www.healthcarefinancenews.com

322. Subject: OPTUM

Received 1/27/24

Stop Profit Driven Health Care in Corvallis:

Take Action Today!

Lucy Jones

323. Subject: comments re Corvallis Clinic optum

Received 1/27/24

To OHA:

I support the purchase of The Corvallis Clinic by OPTUM, with some conditions to address some of the concerns raised.

The Clinic is absolutely on the verge of closing, and this sale is the lesser of two evils. They have no other options, and a closure would send shockwaves to the community.

As you are aware, with clinics closing many places, thousands of patients in Corvallis and surrounding areas would have almost no possibility of finding healthcare anywhere close. This cannot be allowed to happen. The impact on patients, practitioners, and other Clinic employees, would be dire indeed. The livability of Corvallis would suffer with almost no local healthcare options.

Most of the negative comments that have been submitted assume that there are other options, and that OPTUM was moving in for a hostile takeover. This is not the case: the Clinic reached out for a buyer and OPTUM was the only response. We must not let the Clinic close its doors.

Thank you

Chere Pereira

3/11/2024

14

324. Subject: Optum purchase of The Corvallis Clinic

Received 1/29/24

I understand you are no longer accepting feedback on the proposed sale however I strongly recommend further review of the health status of Eugene Oregon Medical Group since their purchase by Optum. From a patient perspective it is not good. Optum can neither retain nor recruit physicians. The concept of a patient centered medical home is laughable. The model is urgent care and I now carry my records with me. Provider morale is dreadful. One can only prune the tree so far before destroying it.

Mary Gent

Eugene OR

325. Subject: Corvallis Clinic Sale

Received 2/4/24

I am in favor of the proposed sale of the Corvallis Clinic to Optum.

I believe that the Corvallis Clinic will close without this sale.

If the CC closes I will be forced to travel to Salem or Eugene to see a Rheumatologist as the CC has 1 of 2 Rheumatologist in the area.

My health will be negatively impacted by the Corvallis Clinic closing.

Todd Weber

Corvallis, OR

326. Subject: Optum/United Health Care

Received 2/4/24

I have been a patient at the Corvallis Clinic for 36 years.

I am concerned that disallowing this merger will decrease my access and healthcare resources in Corvallis. It is unclear that the clinic will remain a viable competitor to the one other large healthcare provider in the mid-Willamette Valley, and it is not even evident that this and smaller providers are interested or willing to serve the demand that exists. This area needs investment in competitive healthcare infrastructure; this merger would bring that.

I urge you to approve the merger.

Kevin Gable

327. Subject: Corvallis Clinic

Received 2/4/24

Please do not close the Corvallis Clinic. My husband and I are in our 80's and have three doctors in the clinic.

We have been with these doctors of years now and have a great deal of trust in them.

Trying to find new doctors in this stage of our life is very difficult. Let the merge take place.

Virginia & Steven Knight

328. Subject: Optum/UHC at the Corvallis Clinic

Received 2/6/24

Among providers, Optum/UHC is notorious for its mismanagement of healthcare systems. They save money by underpaying or refusing to pay providers and by denying patient access to medical care and mental health services, either through intentional delays or administrative profit-driven measures. They are generally unresponsive to inquiries and secretive about appeals processes. The telephone tree is expansive and often results in a long list of phone numbers with no discernible solution. Yes, medical and mental health services are becoming less available in our community so the fear associated with further reductions is valid. If Corvallis Clinic sells to Optum/UHC, there's no guarantee services will continue to be available because providers could leave and/or services could no longer be accessible when needed. Didn't Samaritan Health Services recently terminate their contract with Optum/UHC? Has anyone asked why? In my opinion, this is a systemic issue in Oregon and should be supported through state reorganization and/or funding. Providers, staff members, and patients are all exhausted because the current system of care is unsustainable. Optum/UHC is part of the problem, not the solution.

Desiree Colonica

Corvallis, Oregon

329. Subject: OptumUHC

Received 2/7/24

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

Re: Optum/UnitedHealth takeover of The Corvallis Clinic

We, the undersigned concerned Oregonians, oppose Optum/UnitedHealth taking over The Corvallis Clinic, especially without a comprehensive review. Our objections include the following concerns:

1. Corporate Interests vs. Public Health: Optum Oregon MSO is owned by UnitedHealth Group Inc., the largest healthcare corporation in the US. Its primary responsibility is to its shareholders, focusing on maximizing profits. This business model requires prioritizing financial gains over patient welfare.
2. Impact on Local Healthcare: UnitedHealth's record as the 10th largest corporation in the nation underscores its efficiency in generating profits. However, this comes at the cost of patient care. The takeover of The Corvallis Clinic by such a corporation will lead to increased costs and reduced quality of care for Oregonians.

3. **Affordability and Accessibility Concerns:** The introduction of a mega-corporation like UnitedHealth in to our local healthcare landscape raises serious concerns about the affordability and accessibility of healthcare services. Experience and history proves that corporate takeovers lead to increased costs without improving quality of care.
4. **Distrust in Corporate Promises:** The statements provided by Optum Oregon MSO in their application are refuted by historical evidence. Corporate takeovers of healthcare, particularly by UnitedHealth, have not benefited public health as promised.

In light of these points, we urge the responsible authorities to consider the broader implications of this takeover on the health and well-being of Oregonians. We believe that healthcare should prioritize people over profits, and we strongly advocate against this takeover.

If more evidence is needed that Optum/UnitedHealth will not be able to live up to their promises, we believe it meets the criteria for conducting a comprehensive review under ORS 415.501, since there is certainly potential to have a negative impact on access to affordable care in Oregon, and it also meets the criteria for convening a Community Review Board.

Let's keep our healthcare local, accessible, and patient-centered. Please deny the takeover of The Corvallis Clinic by Optum/UnitedHealth, or conduct a comprehensive review with a Community Review Board if more evidence is needed.

Sincerely,

Kari E Swearingen

330. Subject: FW: Re: Supporting Proposed sale of The Corvallis Clinic to United Health/Optum

Received 2/8/24

Hello,

Previously I had sent in an email below indicating my opposition to the purchase of the Corvallis Clinic by Optum.

However, since the date of my email below, I have had many discussions with doctors, staff, and patients of the Corvallis Clinic. I have now come to understand that the Clinic is in a real bind financially. The choices are to either sell to Optum or to close down permanently. After hearing about the current financial situation and the Clinic losing \$1,000,000 per month (unsustainable obviously), it does appear that the clinic will have to shut down permanently if not sold.

Thus, I am changing my recommendation to now be **in support of the sale of the Corvallis Clinic to Optum**. It is not ideal to be owned by Optum. However, given that the only other choice would be to have the Clinic shut its doors permanently, the sale to Optum, keeping Corvallis Clinic open/running is definitely preferable.

Thus, I am in full support of the sale of The Corvallis Clinic to Optum as the best of the two remaining alternative paths for the clinic. Please support its sale to Optum.

I understand that this may be past the date of acceptance for public comments, but I understand that there has been a continued push to extend the public comment period. Thus, I am hoping this

public comment will still be accepted. At the very least, please remove my previous public comment (email below) from record since I am no longer in opposition to the sale of the clinic to Optum.

Thank you,

Paul [Schlegelmann]

Note: Here is the [previous submission](#) from this commenter.

331. Subject: Corvallis Clinic

Received 2/9/24

I want to urge the board to accept the buy out/merger between OPTUM and the Corvallis Clinic. While keeping a local business appear great on the outside we also know that surviving in the current environment is challenging. The clinic provides health care for thousands of people in the region and if the choice is between a buy out or potential closing of the facilities I would urge the take over any day.

Finding health care in the mid Willamette Valley is challenging at best, if the clinic were to close due to this denial than our communities and health care would be seriously impacted.

I urge the committee to look at the bigger picture and insure we have adequate health care facilities in the mid valley for years to come by approving the Corvallis Clinic request to part of OPTUM.

Thank you,

Suzanne Burbank

332. Subject: Optum Concern Case Example

Received 2/9/24

Optum's proposal to purchase the Corvallis Clinic is of concern to me. I had a recent experience that showed how United Healthcare's, which Optum is part of, cost-cutting methods can hurt patient care. I had been diagnosed by a surgeon (associated with Samaritan Health Services) as obviously needing back surgery. When I went back for the pre-surgery appointment, the surgeon decided I didn't need it after all, and by the way, my insurance, United Healthcare through AARP, doesn't pay him enough or in a timely manner and is unresponsive. Samaritan Health Services was not going to renew their contract with United Healthcare. I went for a second opinion to another surgeon who confirmed I obviously needed surgery and what insurance I had was not a factor!

Steve Napack

333. Subject: OPTUM

Received 2/9/24

HCMO:

I have read and agree with all of the letters opposing the buyout/merger of OPTUM and the Corvallis Clinic. So I will not repeat the trustworthy information offered by knowledgeable people. I can only add my own experience. I live outside of Eugene in Elmira only 33 miles from Corvallis.

Recently, my PA retired at the clinic I go to. She was replaced by a young PA. It seems that a couple of years ago he moved from out of state to accept a job with OMG. The day he arrived he found out that OMG had been bought by OPTUM. He like many of his co-healthcare workers sought other employment. He is so happy now to be working in our local independent clinic. Why? He said because he can take the time and give the type of care that he and his patients deem necessary.

I wrote an earlier letter asking OHA to not believe in the promises offered by OPTUM but to examine their "trail of tears" left in Eugene when they acquired OMG. Hopefully, that will be a part of your examination of the facts.

Thank you for listening to all your constituents who ask you to reject this proposal.

In Peace and Solidarity;

Lou Sinniger

Elmira, OR

334. Subject: Optum and The Corvallis Clinic - opposition comment from the Association for Independent Medicine

Received 2/12/24

Good morning,

Please see attached and below a statement from the Association for Independent Medicine opposing the acquisition of the Corvallis Clinic by Optum Oregon.

To: Oregon Health Authority, Health Care Market Oversight

From: Association for Independent Medicine

Re: 018 Optum & The Corvallis Clinic

The Association for Independent Medicine is comprised of over 400 physicians from groups in five states – Oregon, Illinois, Michigan, Kansas, and Texas. Founded on the principle that maintaining physician control of healthcare decision-making results in the highest quality of care for patients and most efficient use of healthcare resources, the association supports independent physicians and groups who want to remain as such in the face of increasing private equity involvement and corporate takeovers. That's why the Association for Independent Medicine opposes the acquisition of The Corvallis Clinic by Optum Oregon.

Independent physicians should be just that – independent – and not bound by terms set by corporate group employers and owners who set dangerous and unreachable metrics for physicians to achieve, and should have the freedom to manage the medical group as the physician-owners see fit. Allowing corporate entities to have a decision-making role in physician group management, policies and employment only harms the physicians and the patients they care for. Furthermore, the relationship of Optum as a subsidiary of UnitedHealthCare raises concerns about the ability for Optum to manage The Corvallis Clinic in a patient-focused way, without trying to save money by cutting test and procedure orders. Insurance companies have no place in the exam room – the relationship between a physician and patient is sacred and no outside influence should affect the discussions and decisions made in the interest of patients' health.

We understand the financial difficulties faced by The Corvallis Clinic and encourage other local physician-owned groups to consider partnerships opportunities to support the needs of the local patient population and current physicians.

For these reasons described above, the Association for Independent Medicine opposes the acquisition of The Corvallis Clinic by Optum Oregon.

Sincerely,

Marco Fernandez, MD

President, Association for Independent Medicine

www.associationforindependentmedicine.org

335. Subject: Sale of Corvallis Clinic to United Health Care

Received 2/12/24

Hell, I understand that the comment period is over, but I nevertheless want to register and objection or at least a caution as the State of Oregon contemplates this sale and its ramifications.

TrustPilot indicates serious concerns with the reliability of this company and in particular its services to those who are most at risk, elderly medicare patients and other who have difficulty in advocating for themselves. The low ratings and complaint go on and on. Should Oregon choose to allow this sale to proceed, I hope that there will be ongoing reviews and accountability to the state for a company that appears to be a seriously ill person's worst nightmare.

Thank you,

Joan Gail Hill

Brownsville, OR

336. Subject: optum buyout

Received 2/12/24

The bottom line is I don't want the Corvallis Clinic to close. If that means an Optum buyout, then so be it. I know that without prompt action, the Clinic will close.

Cecilia DeMeo

Corvallis, OR

337. Subject: Optum /Corvallis Clinic - Please read!

Received 2/13/24

I realize that the end date for public comments expired almost a month ago but I only just found out about this proposed acquisition/merger yesterday and am very concerned that I may lose an invaluable resource dedicated to my health and my life. Years of vital relationship building between doctors and patients would be lost if Corvallis lost our clinic and a heavy burden would be placed on the other medical facilities in our area, a burden they can hardly face with the current state of understaffing and meager Medicare payments prevalent throughout the medical care industry. My understanding is that Corvallis Clinic actively sought out potential merger partners to help stave off bankruptcy caused in large part by these two conditions.

The presence of the clinic in our part of the valley is critical to many of us and its loss would be profound and utterly sad. The doctors that I have seen there are of the highest integrity and quality of care. I am deeply concerned that losing my urologist in the midst of the cancer care that he and his staff have provided me would have a serious negative impact on my health. I can say that he saved my life and my trust in him is paramount.

If by some miracle this email has managed to squeak through to someone in your organization who has a voice in this matter, please hear my plea to allow this acquisition/merger to go through. Not only my plea, but those of the other thousands of patients who rely on this crucial resource.

Thank you for listening.

With regards,

Mark Brown

Corvallis, OR

338. Subject: OPTUM/TCC

Received 2/13/24

To: HCMO

2/13/2024

From: Bruce Thomson, MD

Re: Optum/TCC proposal

I am writing out of my concern that the Optum/TCC proposed consolidation would bring overall harm to the Corvallis community. This concern is founded on the great upset to patients in Lane County in 2022 when Optum took over EugeneOMG. For 3-4 months patients were not permitted to book afternoon appointments with their medical providers since all EugeneOMG medical offices were closed to patients; this was to allow staff to "master" the OPTUM medical information system for referrals, authorizations and booking of diagnostic studies. From a local physician colleague from Lane County, 30-40% of medical providers left EugeneOMG once Optum took over

3/11/2024

management of Eugene OMG. You can read this colleague's "public comment (#13)" on the HCMO website for TCC/Optum proposal.

As we look to the proposed TCC/OPTUM transaction, the best way to assess potential harm to the Corvallis community would be an examination of the impact on patients in the EugeneOMG/Optum consolidation in 2022. I understand that the OHA has no legal obligation to evaluate EugeneOMG/Optum since that consolidation was completed prior to the existence of HCMO. However, in the 2 years since the consolidation, there is much important information to be learned by an examination of the EugeneOMG/OPTUM.

339. Subject: UnitedHealth Group taking over Corvallis Clinic

Received 2/13/24

To Whom will make the considerations of this topic.

Although I support the doctors of the Corvallis Clinic and their ability to earn a decent living, I would be very sad to see the United Health Group take over that health care operation. This would severely reduce our health care choices, and in all likelihood increase our cost and reduce the time and availability of our providers. I strongly urge that another option be considered and that United Health Group not be allowed to degrade our health care by taking over the Corvallis Clinic.

Sincerely,

Douglas Russell

Corvallis, OR

PS. Do not allow my contact information to be used, sold, nor shared.

340. Subject: Optum Corvallis

Received 2/21/24

John Santa MD MPH Comment on Optum/Corvallis Clinic transaction February 21, 2024

Analysis of Optum/Corvallis Clinic public comments

I did an analysis of the 327 public comments published on the HCMO site. The latest comment published was from Feb 12, 2024. HCMO is open to comments until February 21 so it is likely more comments will be published. There was a small number of duplicate comments and duplicate commenters.

310 comments expressed opposition to the transaction. 14 expressed support for the transaction. 3 were neutral.

A petition opposing the transaction was submitted as a comment that had over 600 signers.

38 commenters mentioned they were involved in providing health care. 37 opposed the transaction.

17 commenters specifically asked that a Community Review Board be organized as part of a comprehensive review and the idea of a Community Review Board was urged in the petition signed by 600+ people.

7 commenters specifically asked that the review include a previous and similar transaction involving Optum and the Oregon Medical Group. Such an analysis would likely include credible post transaction data relevant to the Optum approach in Corvallis.

From a qualitative point of view several impressions emerged.

Commenters were overwhelmingly (more than half by my estimate) covered by Medicare and specific concerns were voiced about their Medicare coverage. Commenters with traditional Medicare are worried the transaction will result in the Clinic no longer seeing them. They are also worried they will be forced to enroll in a Medicare Advantage Plan controlled by United Health Care. Many have recently left United's Medicare Advantage Plan because Samaritan Health no longer participates in United's Medicare Advantage Plan.

Almost all commenters linked Optum to United Health Care. They do not see Optum as independent of United Health Care but rather subservient to it. Many expressed a concern that Corvallis Clinic had been free of a conflict of interest in terms of insurance plans but would now put the interests of United Health Care first.....and they would be caught in the middle.

I did not count how many commenters were Corvallis Clinic patients, but I suspect a near majority are. I do not recall one comment expressing significant concerns about the Corvallis Clinic quality of care. There were a few concerns expressed about administrative services. When speaking of the Clinic many commenters used the term "our clinic." Many commenters have been patients at the Clinic for decades. The current owners of the Corvallis Clinic should be proud of the trust they have built in the community and with individual patients. It is an asset that could become key to the best solution.

There is a HUGE gap in trust. There is a near 100% Trust in Corvallis Clinic when it comes to clinical care. And there is a near 100% distrust in United Health Care and Optum. Even those in favor of the transaction framed their support as the better choice than bankruptcy, rather than confidence there would be clinical improvement as a result. Many commenters submitted long lists of citations of United Health Care lawsuits, investigations and other objective analyses of quality issues.

The comment process is not representative.

Only one commenter specifically mentioned they were on OHP.

There were no comments submitted by employers focused on the pros and cons of this transaction for them.

There were no comments submitted by any local city, county, health district or any other jurisdiction in the Mid Valley. Corvallis Clinic is the second largest employer in Corvallis and whatever happens could trigger a significant positive or negative community economic impact.

There was little direct discussion of equity issues. But most of those opposed expressed concerns that a for profit takeover would transfer power and resources from patients to shareholders, from the less wealthy to the more wealthy, from Oregon taxpayers to national investors.

Some of the most powerful comments came from individuals associated with Corvallis Clinic. An anonymous Corvallis Clinic provider opposes the transaction and is fearful about what the future holds but has a gag clause. Several commenters expressed a sense of the financial problems facing the Clinic—some expressing concern about management issues including the management

of substantial federal funds received during the pandemic. Others express concern about the Samaritan Health relationship. Employees are fearful their jobs will be threatened. Some felt other options should be pursued, while others suggested that all options had been pursued and Optum was the only option.

The most frustrating omission though is the comment process does not result in a cohesive story explaining what is going on. It is hard to imagine that a 75 year old organization, trusted by the community it serves, with a solid if not outstanding clinical record, believes it has only one option. And that option is driven by a buyer who prohibits key employees from speaking, routinely hides even basic information and creates a climate of fear and desperation in the community.

341. Subject: Corvallis Clinic Optum Merger

Received 2/26/24

As an employee of the Corvallis Clinic I must remain anonymous

Having read through all of The opinions that have been posted on this site, I am left with one opinion: Nobody wants the Corvallis Clinic to dissolve. There are over 100 health care providers at that institution providing excellent health care to over 250,000 Oregonians each year. The institution has been suffering as a result of a fixed charge schedule instituted by the government placed against a floating expense burden. Wages, rent in material costs float with market value, reimbursement from the federal government is fixed. Recently a tax on gross receipts has been added to this burden. The clinic is not a non-for-profit organization, and they have not been able to generate enough revenue to cover these costs for years. The providers have been taking pay cut after pay cut to make up the balance. This has led to the spiraling demise that has left the clinic so vulnerable.

Many have suggested that the clinic seek a partner from a local institution like Samaritan or Kaiser. The clinic tried this and the answer in all instances was no, except from one entity, Optum. Like it or not, after 2 years of looking they are the only option.

Nobody wants the clinic to dissolve nor do they want the healthcare to diminish. Unfortunately if the merger with Optum does not go through immediately, then the Corvallis Clinic will dissolve in the next few weeks. If the Oregon Health authority allows this to happen by instituting the delay or issuing an outright negative response then they do so with full knowledge that either one of these actions will lead to the dissolution of the Corvallis Clinic. The OHA has this specific information. If the clinic fails, they are directly responsible for 250,000 Oregonians losing their health care providers. Those providers will be leaving to go to other parts of the country where they can be paid a market salary. The 600 employees will be leaving and going to other markets as well. Corvallis will lose this resource, leaving Samaritan with a monopoly. The question at hand is not whether Oregon wants Optum to take over the clinic; The question is whether OHA will allow the Corvallis Clinic to survive.

OHA, please allow the Corvallis Clinic to be saved.

342. Subject: United Health

Received 2/27/24

I write to express to you my deeply felt concern and alarm regarding the pending merger between the Corvallis Clinic, PC, and United Health. I have had many experiences with UH in recent years while handling the affairs of an elderly gentleman for whom I served as legal guardian. UH has demonstrated itself to be about as difficult an insurance company as I have ever encountered. They are not helpful. Quite the contrary, they obfuscate, delay, force undue work, delay, give conflicting information, delay, and also delay. I should note that many providers in Corvallis have served notice this last year of their intent to drop UH from their service. I am very, very troubled at this impending prospect of a merger. This serves no one except the corporate offices, and not in the interest of Oregonians who need health services.

Of even greater concern is the unbelievable violation of confidence created by delivering health services to the control of the insurance industry, thereby creating a dangerous and irretrievable interference between citizens and our health. I object to this possibility in the strongest possible way.

Respectfully,

Dr. Michael Beachley
Corvallis, OR

343. Subject: Corvallis clinic optum merger support

Received 2/27/24

I'm writing this letter to support the proposed merger of Corvallis Clinic and Optum. It is my understanding that OHA has imposed conditions on the potential merger which would make it financially infeasible for the merger to continue.

It is also my understanding that all of the doctors in the Corvallis Clinic are in support of the merger going through. I would ask that Oregon Health Authority removed the conditions which would make it infeasible and enable the completion of this merger. The loss of the Corvallis Clinic to the community would be devastating and severely limit Healthcare access. It would limit competition and leave only a single provider. It would reduce the number of available doctors significantly as all are most of the doctors from the Corvallis Clinic would leave the area. They would also put medical records at risk because of the fact that these would be in limbo without maintenance and patients may lose access to their data. I strongly support the merger and ask for the removal of unnecessary conditions.

Thanks,
Peter Seaders, PE/PLS

344. Subject: 018 Corvallis Clinic and Optum Support

Received 2/27/24

I am writing to show support of the Optum buyout only because our community is already lacking access to healthcare. If the Clinics close it will be catastrophic for Corvallis, Albany, Lebanon, and

Philomath. We are already facing a 7 month new patient wait for the singular office accepting new patients. This may not be the best fit for a buyer, but it is at least a buyer.

345. Subject: Corvallis Clinic and Optum Merger

Received 2/27/24

I'm writing this letter to support the proposed merger of Corvallis Clinic and Optum. It is my understanding that OHA has imposed conditions on the potential merger which would make it financially infeasible for the merger to continue. It is also my understanding that all of the doctors in the Corvallis Clinic are in support of the merger going through. I would ask that Oregon Health Authority removed the conditions which would make it infeasible and enable the completion of this merger. The loss of the Corvallis Clinic to the community would be devastating and severely limit Healthcare access. It would limit competition and leave only a single provider. It would reduce the number of available doctors significantly as all are most of the doctors from the Corvallis Clinic would leave the area. They would also put medical records at risk because of the fact that these would be in limbo without maintenance and patients may lose access to their data. I strongly support the merger and ask for the removal of unnecessary conditions.

346. Subject: Corvallis clinic and Optum merger

Received 2/27/24

I'm writing this letter to support the proposed merger of Corvallis Clinic and Optum. It is my understanding that OHA has imposed conditions on the potential merger which would make it financially infeasible for the merger to continue. It is also my understanding that all of the doctors in the Corvallis Clinic are in support of the merger going through. I would ask that Oregon Health Authority removed the conditions which would make it infeasible and enable the completion of this merger. The loss of the Corvallis Clinic to the community would be devastating and severely limit Healthcare access. It would limit competition and leave only a single provider. It would reduce the number of available doctors significantly as all are most of the doctors from the Corvallis Clinic would leave the area. They would also put medical records at risk because of the fact that these would be in limbo without maintenance and patients may lose access to their data. I strongly support the merger and ask for the removal of unnecessary conditions.

347. Subject: Corvallis Clinic Merger

Received 2/27/24

I'm writing this letter to support the proposed merger of Corvallis Clinic and Optum. It is my understanding that OHA has imposed conditions on the potential merger which would make it financially infeasible for the merger to continue. It is also my understanding that all of the doctors in the Corvallis Clinic are in support of the merger going through. I would ask that Oregon Health Authority removed the conditions which would make it infeasible and enable the completion of this merger. The loss of the Corvallis Clinic to the community would be devastating and severely limit Healthcare access. It would limit competition and leave only a single provider. It would reduce the number of available doctors significantly as all are most of the doctors from the Corvallis Clinic would leave the area. They would also put medical records at risk because of the fact that these would be in limbo without maintenance and patients may lose access to their data. I strongly support the merger and ask for the removal of unnecessary conditions.

348. Subject: Corvallis Clinic and Optum merger

Received 2/27/24

I'm writing this letter to support the proposed merger of Corvallis Clinic and Optum. It is my understanding that OHA has imposed conditions on the potential merger which would make it financially infeasible for the merger to continue. It is also my understanding that all of the doctors in the Corvallis Clinic are in support of the merger going through. I would ask that Oregon Health Authority removed the conditions which would make it infeasible and enable the completion of this merger. The loss of the Corvallis Clinic to the community would be devastating and severely limit Healthcare access. It would limit competition and leave only a single provider. It would reduce the number of available doctors significantly as all are most of the doctors from the Corvallis Clinic would leave the area. They would also put medical records at risk because of the fact that these would be in limbo without maintenance and patients may lose access to their data. I strongly support the merger and ask for the removal of unnecessary conditions.

349. Subject: Closure of Corvallis Clinic

Received 2/27/24

Good evening,

I'm writing this letter to support the proposed merger of Corvallis Clinic and Optum. It is my understanding that OHA has imposed conditions on the potential merger which would make it financially infeasible for the merger to continue. It is also my understanding that all of the doctors in the Corvallis Clinic are in support of the merger going through. I would ask that Oregon Health Authority removed the conditions which would make it infeasible and enable the completion of this merger. The loss of the Corvallis Clinic to the community would be devastating and severely limit Healthcare access. It would limit competition and leave only a single provider. It would reduce the number of available doctors significantly as all are most of the doctors from the Corvallis Clinic would leave the area. They would also put medical records at risk because of the fact that these would be in limbo without maintenance and patients may lose access to their data. I strongly support the merger and ask for the removal of unnecessary conditions.

Anderson, Benjamin

350. Subject: In favor of merger

Received 2/27/24

I'm writing this letter to support the proposed merger of Corvallis Clinic and Optum. It is my understanding that OHA has imposed conditions on the potential merger which would make it financially infeasible for the merger to continue. It is also my understanding that all of the doctors in the Corvallis Clinic are in support of the merger going through. I would ask that Oregon Health Authority removed the conditions which would make it infeasible and enable the completion of this merger. The loss of the Corvallis Clinic to the community would be devastating and severely limit Healthcare access. It would limit competition and leave only a single provider. It would reduce the number of available doctors significantly as all are most of the doctors from the Corvallis Clinic would leave the area.

They would also put medical records at risk because of the fact that these would be in limbo

Rainbow Tornell

351. Subject: Optum

Received 2/27/24

I'm writing this letter to support the proposed merger of Corvallis Clinic and Optum. It is my understanding that OHA has imposed conditions on the potential merger which would make it financially infeasible for the merger to continue.

It is also my understanding that all of the doctors in the Corvallis Clinic are in support of the merger going through. I would ask that Oregon Health Authority removed the conditions which would make it infeasible and enable the completion of this merger. The loss of the Corvallis Clinic to the community would be devastating and severely limit Healthcare access. It would limit competition and leave only a single provider. It would reduce the number of available doctors significantly as all are most of the doctors from the Corvallis Clinic would leave the area. They would also put medical records at risk because of the fact that these would be in limbo without maintenance and patients may lose access to their data. I strongly support the merger and ask for the removal of unnecessary conditions.

Thank you,
Noah Thompson

352. Subject: (no subject)

Received 2/27/24

I'm writing this letter to support the proposed merger of Corvallis Clinic and Optum. It is my understanding that OHA has imposed conditions on the potential merger which would make it financially infeasible for the merger to continue. It is also my understanding that all of the doctors in the Corvallis Clinic are in support of the merger going through. I would ask that Oregon Health Authority removed the conditions which would make it infeasible and enable the completion of this merger. The loss of the Corvallis Clinic to the community would be devastating and severely limit Healthcare access. It would limit competition and leave only a single provider. It would reduce the number of available doctors significantly as all are most of the doctors from the Corvallis Clinic would leave the area. They would also put medical records at risk because of the fact that these would be in limbo without maintenance and patients may lose access to their data. I strongly support the merger and ask for the removal of unnecessary conditions.

353. Subject: Corvallis Clinic Merger

Received 2/27/24

I'm writing this letter to support the proposed merger of Corvallis Clinic and Optum. It is my understanding that OHA has imposed conditions on the potential merger which would make it financially infeasible for the merger to continue. It is also my understanding that all of the doctors in the Corvallis Clinic are in support of the merger going through. I would ask that Oregon Health Authority removed the conditions which would make it infeasible and enable the completion of this merger. The loss of the Corvallis Clinic to the community would be devastating and severely limit Healthcare access. It would limit competition and leave only a single provider. It would reduce the number of available doctors significantly as all are most of the doctors from the Corvallis Clinic

would leave the area. They would also put medical records at risk because of the fact that these would be in limbo without maintenance and patients may lose access to their data. I strongly support the merger and ask for the removal of unnecessary conditions.

354. Subject: Urgent!

Received 2/27/24

I'm writing this letter to support the proposed merger of Corvallis Clinic and Optum. It is my understanding that OHA has imposed conditions on the potential merger which would make it financially infeasible for the merger to continue. It is also my understanding that all of the doctors in the Corvallis Clinic are in support of the merger going through. I would ask that Oregon Health Authority removed the conditions which would make it infeasible and enable the completion of this merger. The loss of the Corvallis Clinic to the community would be devastating and severely limit Healthcare access. It would limit competition and leave only a single provider. It would reduce the number of available doctors significantly as all are most of the doctors from the Corvallis Clinic would leave the area. They would also put medical records at risk because of the fact that these would be in limbo without maintenance and patients may lose access to their data. I strongly support the merger and ask for the removal of unnecessary conditions.

355. Subject: Corvallis Clinic Merger

Received 2/27/24

To whom it may concern:

I'm writing this letter to support the proposed merger of Corvallis Clinic and Optum as planned. It is my understanding that OHA has imposed conditions on the potential merger which would make it financially infeasible for the merger to continue. It is also my understanding that all of the doctors in the Corvallis Clinic are in support of the merger going through. I would ask that Oregon Health Authority remove all conditions that would make it infeasible and enable the completion of this merger. The loss of the Corvallis Clinic to our local community would be devastating and severely limit access to healthcare. In addition, it would limit competition and leave only a single provider in the area. It would also reduce the number of available doctors significantly as most of the doctors from the Corvallis Clinic would leave the area if this merger doesn't go through. This would also put medical records at risk because these would be in limbo without maintenance and patients may lose access to their data. I strongly support the planned merger and ask for the removal of unnecessary conditions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jason H. Harris, MBA

356. Subject: Corvallis Clinic Merger

Received 2/27/24

I'm writing this letter to support the proposed merger of Corvallis Clinic and Optum. It is my understanding that OHA has imposed conditions on the potential merger which would make it financially infeasible for the merger to continue. It is also my understanding that all of the doctors in the Corvallis Clinic are in support of the merger going through. I would ask that Oregon Health Authority removed the conditions which would make it infeasible and enable the completion of this

merger. The loss of the Corvallis Clinic to the community would be devastating and severely limit Healthcare access. It would limit competition and leave only a single provider. It would reduce the number of available doctors significantly as all are most of the doctors from the Corvallis Clinic would leave the area. They would also put medical records at risk because of the fact that these would be in limbo without maintenance and patients may lose access to their data. I strongly support the merger and ask for the removal of unnecessary conditions.

357. Subject: OHA restrictions for the purchase of the Corvallis Clinic

Received 2/27/24

Hello,

I'm writing this letter to support the proposed merger of Corvallis Clinic and Optum. It is my understanding that OHA has imposed conditions on the potential merger which would make it financially infeasible for the merger to continue.

It is also my understanding that all the doctors in the Corvallis Clinic are in support of the merger going through. I would ask that Oregon Health Authority remove the conditions which would make it infeasible and enable the completion of this merger. The loss of the Corvallis Clinic to the community would be devastating and severely limit Healthcare access. It would limit competition and remove the need to provide excellent service. The availability to establish care within a 30 minute drive of Corvallis is almost non-existent currently and will only get worse. It would reduce the number of available doctors would have a negative impact on our community. They would also put medical records at risk because these would be in limbo without maintenance and patients may lose access to their data. I strongly support the merger and ask for the removal of unnecessary conditions.

To all those against larger business, losing a healthcare option is not a solution. Choose the place you wish to support with your money after the merger. Please do not limit our healthcare options, so we lose our choice. Having no choice just leaves us to be taken advantage of by the next closest clinic.

Sincerely,

Taylor Kiefel

358. Subject: Support Needed for Corvallis Clinic-Optum Merger

Received 2/28/24

I'm writing this letter to support the proposed merger of corvallis clinic and optum. it is my understanding that oha has imposed conditions on the potential merger which would make it financially infeasible for the merger to continue. it is also my understanding that all of the doctors in the corvallis clinic are in support of the merger going through. i would ask that oregon health authority removed the conditions which would make it infeasible and enable the completion of this merger. the loss of the corvallis clinic to the community would be devastating and severely limit healthcare access. it would limit competition and leave only a single provider. it would reduce the number of available doctors significantly as all are most of the doctors from the corvallis clinic would leave the area. they would also put medical records at risk because of the fact that these

would be in limbo without maintenance and patients may lose access to their data. i strongly support the merger and ask for the removal of unnecessary conditions.

Thanks,

Nolan Bartlett

359. Subject: Corvallis Clinic

Received 2/28/24

Greetings,

I live in Corvallis and I am concerned about the Corvallis Clinic potentially shutting its doors due to the merger with Optum being blocked. It is very difficult to get health care in this community, and we need all the doctors we can. Please work to keep the doors open in this important city resource: my wife, two small children, and myself are counting on it.

Dan Kammerzelt

360. Subject: Optum Corvallis Clinic

Received 2/29/24

I have concerns about the sale of the Corvallis Clinic to Optum. If the Corvallis Clinic is in financial trouble, then they should be willing to disclose their finances. I do know that Samaritan can take a year to send out a bill. And the Corvallis Clinic, it takes days. But is there financial situation due to poor management or the owners (doctors) just want to cash out? When people state the Corvallis Clinic is losing \$1MM per month, then they publicly need to disclose that. Not just float "information" into the community.

I do know this. If Optum does buy the business. There is no doubt they will be financially successful. And this will be done by raising rates and laying off workers. Both of which impact the current patients of the Corvallis Clinic.

I'm opposed to the buy out unless they are willing to share their financial information.

Larry Davis
Toledo, OR

361. Subject: Optum takeover of Corvallis Clinic

Received 3/1/24

Please God No!

This corporate takeover will lead me to seek care elsewhere. I do not want the corporate profit minded United Heath Care umbrella company to get involved in my heart care decisions or services.

They cut costs through cutting services. The best health care is best practiced outside of this harmful corporate model.

3/11/2024

Don't let their high priced marketing and sales reps away your opinion.

362. Subject: Oppose Optum/Corvallis Clinic merger

Received 3/2/24

Testimony *against the merger* of Optum for the Oregon Health Policy Board and the Oregon Health Authority and Health Care Market Oversight (HCMO) Program on March 4, 2024

I am Michael Huntington, MD, a retired radiation oncologist from Corvallis. I provided testimony against the merger on January 9, 2024.

I continue to strongly oppose the proposed merger of the Corvallis Clinic with Optum Oregon Management Services Organization (MSO). The likely result of the merger would be increased costs and poorer healthcare outcomes for our communities.

Clinic has seriously underestimated the desire of the communities it serves to retain local control of health care for our region.

Clinic patients have heard that the Clinic is considering bankruptcy. A bankruptcy process can allow a business to resume as creditors weigh the options of forgiving enough debt to enable the business to survive. I sense a strong desire in our community to help the Clinic survive while retaining local control of health care. I am willing to contribute a significant amount of money to pay for legal advice needed to create a hospital district or other arrangement that would maintain local control of the Corvallis Clinic. Others I know are equally willing.

United Health Group has a long and well-documented history of fraud and delayed/denied payment to providers. I don't want our community to risk exposure to such behavior from such a large and powerful force.

In February, cyber-hackers stole from UHG records of more than 200 million patients, crippling operations for UHG's Change Health unit and with rippling effects on Medicare, the U.S. military medical health agency Tricare, CVS Health, and other companies. No one should make any deals with UHG until the full extent of the breach is known and all are reassured that such a breach will not harm our community.

Michael Huntington MD
Corvallis, OR

363. Subject: Submission of comment on Optum application

Received 3/3/24

I am submitting the attached comment. I am also submitting it to OHPb because I think there is significant urgency in making sure HCMO includes this event in its March 8 review/decision and the public should know about this recent event.

John Santa MD MPH

Comment on the Optum/Corvallis Clinic HCMO application and Change Health/Optum/United Health Group Ransomware Attack March 3, 2024

My name is John Santa MD MPH and I oppose the Optum HCMO application. A decision on the preliminary review has been delayed until March 8. A reason for the delay has not been provided to the public. The public is still allowed to comment as a result, but comments may not be published or occur in time for consideration. So, I am expressing concerns to OHPB, OHA and the public about a recent and serious issue.

Last week's news about Change Health, United Health Group and Optum raises significant concerns related to a ransomware attack by Blackcat on Change Health but possibly reaching into Optum. On its website Change Health notes it is part of Optum and content about the attack is on the United Health Group web pages.

I spent 5 years working with hundreds of health systems urging them to voluntarily implement OpenNotes. In every organization, Chief Medical Information Officers told me their first priority was to operate the business systems critical to smooth operation. Flaws in those systems could paralyze a health system. According to news outlets (Reuters, KFF news) that is now happening.

The Change Health attack is affecting business processes across the industry including pharmacies, insurers, hospitals and physician practices. While United Health says the effects are limited, other experts urge caution and counsel health organizations to be cautious about using Change Health connections until the impact is fully understood and disclosed. Change Health/United acknowledges that key processes are affected, alternatives are being developed but significant impact continues including manual approaches. As of today, Change Health/United has not set a date when systems will be restored. I can assure you that every Chief Medical Information Officer and Chief Information Officer is focused on the assessment of impact of this attack.

We already know that the Oregon Medical Group experienced significant administrative challenges and delays as they moved to the Optum administrative systems.

Significant harm to the Corvallis community and Oregon could occur if these problems are not disclosed and completely resolved before any decision is made on this transaction. Other Optum owned groups in Oregon should be evaluated by an independent technology expert to ascertain the extent of this attack in their processes. HCMO should consider engaging an outside IT advisor if there is any support for moving this application forward.

This information is yet another reason to deny this application or pursue a comprehensive review to sort out the specifics.

364. Subject: OPTUM – Oppose acquisition of Corvallis Clinic

Received 3/4/24

Additional evidence of United Health Care's negative influence is in headlines today, as their wholly owned "Change Healthcare" is hacked, harming many. This organization, and consolidation in general, is clearly not in the public interest and obviously endangers life and health.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2024/03/03/change-health-care-hack-hospitals/>

Again, please use all powers available to limit this predatory entity's power over our health.

Thanks --Wes

365. Subject: Optum effort Corvallis Clinic

Received 3/4/24

Please totally reject the effort to take Corvallis Clinic away from local control.

Bob Hannigan
Corvallis OR

366. Subject: HB 4130

Received 3/4/24

Please pass this bill. Corporations like OPTUM should not be making a profit on people's health. In addition, records show that when this has happened, prices go up and quality of care goes down as staffing is reduced and willingness to pay for treatments that doctors deem necessary are not covered. Recently, my neighbor who is an internal medicine practitioner gave up her private practice because it was so difficult to receive payment from corporate companies, in this case insurance companies.

Rochelle Murphy

Corvallis, Oregon

367. Subject: "Optum" & United HealthCare & Corvallis Clinic DO NOT GO TOGETHER!

Received 3/4/24

Hello,

The above subject line shouts "Caution - Do Not Pass Go!" Optum is Medicare Prescription drug plan administered by United HealthCare. In a sane world, the wisdom of NOT ALLOWING COMBINING these three entities would be obvious.

For some bizarre reason in this age of reckless take-overs, there isn't a legislative "watchdog" at the gate, barking loudly!

Please STOP this Hostile to Delivery of Quality Healthcare to patients and community. Please Stop this Train wreck ! Patients, healthcare delivery, medical staff and the health of Corvallis communities will be the casualties.

Respectfully,

Karen Wells, 97211

368. Subject: optum

Received 3/6/24

I am opposed to the acquisition of the Corvallis Clinic by United Health. My primary doctor is with TCC.

Please feel free to send me any info with regards to this, ahead of the vote on Friday.

Regards,

Sean Doyle

369. Subject: Optum Takeovers

Received 3/6/24

This is the second time in a month that I've been made aware of this company's takeover of health care clinics. Apparently, this has already happened to OMG with the consequence of many employees (including doctors) leaving in droves and patients, who have been with OMG for many years, not able to see their doctors again....with no notice! What a disaster for so many as there is a shortage of physicians in this area (Eugene). Now the Corvallis Clinic is about to be subsumed. Many years ago I worked at the Corvallis Clinic and it saddens me to see this. What next? Stop the madness and suffering of citizens whose lives are upended by these corporate takeovers and loss of health care facilities (in Eugene we recently loss our hospital/ER!).

Laurie Gold

370. Subject: Opposition to Proposed UnitedHealth / Optum Acquisition of Corvallis Clinic

Received 3/6/24

Hello,

I plead for you to conduct a comprehensive review of the proposed acquisition of the Corvallis Clinic by this for-profit "healthcare" conglomerate before taking final action! The inherent conflict of interest in this proposed acquisition is plain for all to see: patient well being and timely access to healthcare should ALWAYS take precedence over corporate profiteering!

Jill Farrow

Corvallis OR

371. Subject: OPTUM

Received 3/6/24

I am a 71 year old resident of Philomath Oregon. I was born at a hospital in Corvallis Oregon and the Corvallis Clinic has been my source of medical support since that day. When Philomath Family Medicine opened I happily moved to the doctors and staff a little closer to home. Then the two combined and it was a wonderful combination of all the best of medical support in our community.

We already have a huge breakdown in services with the confusion between Samaritan Hospital and United Health Care insurance- that has yet to really be completely made clear to the public.

Please conduct a comprehensive review of the proposal before taking final action!

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue for the health care needs in our area.

Carol Leach

372. Subject: Optum

Received 3/6/24

The takeover of local hospitals and clinics by corporations may make sense to corporations who want to make profits by controlling health care delivery.

But this is not good for our health care system and it is not good for our health.

Health care is a human right. Please treat it as such.

Making a profit from controlling and monopolizing the provision of health care in a local area is a violation of the basic principles behind granting corporations limited liability.

Benjamin (Benjy) Ben-Baruch

Ashland OR

373. Subject: Optum

Received 3/6/24

The public comments are overwhelmingly opposed to this acquisition. Count me as one of them.

--

Mark Schwebke

374. Subject: Optum

Received 3/6/24

Please do not allow the sale of the Corvallis Clinic to go through without FIRST conducting a completely comprehensive review of the proposal.

Corporate health "care" prioritizes the bottom line and non-medical business people are making health care decisions based on a business model where shareholder profits are the priority.

Thank you for your consideration,

Anne Arquette, RN

375. Subject: Optimum

Received 3/7/24

Please protect our citizens' healthcare! Stop corporate takeover!

Thanks!

Carol Scharfer

376. Subject: Optum

Received 3/7/24

As more national attention is given to the private equity purchase of health care facilities, please consider the body of evidence that is being collected to question the outcomes of such purchases or mergers. Our health care should NOT be used as another commodity to make greater profits for these corporations. They buy and sell to maximize profit; their aim is not to provide what we, the citizens, need in health care, education, housing and the other sectors of our economy these corporations have found to be ripe for looting.

377. Subject: United Health Group/Chance Health_ The most significant attack on the health-care system in U.S. history.

Received 3/7/24

In [this March 3 Washington Post article about the UHG/ChanceHealth data breach](#) is a quote by Molly Smith, group vice president for public policy at the American Hospital Association, "As of now, our assessment is that this is the most significant attack on the health-care system in U.S. history." The article is attached.

In my view the hack is more than a fixable glitch. It is a national security breach. Oregon should not jump into the breach with UHG/Optum. Please deny the Optum/Corvallis Clinic merger request or at least require a Comprehensive Community Review. TCC may have to file for Chapter 11, but our community is willing to do what it takes to keep the Clinic open and locally controlled.

Mike Huntington M.D.

Corvallis, OR

378. Subject: Optum transaction

Received 3/7/24

I am submitting a comment regarding the Optum Transaction.

John Santa MD MPH

Comments from John Santa MD MPH regarding proposed acquisition of Corvallis Clinic by Optum/UnitedHealthGroup. March 7, 2024.

I hesitate to submit this comment the night before a decision is announced about this review but there is no other communication option to the public. Yesterday I received from the Department of Justice a document I requested that outlines conditions proposed by the HCMO program that would accompany approval of the acquisition of the Corvallis Clinic. There is also a proposed draft order. The documents themselves are not dated but are referred to in emails in the Feb 15 to 23 range. This is likely where the negotiation has started between HCMO and the applicants. I think it is likely there have been other communications that unfortunately my request was deemed to not include. These documents are all HCMO and DOJ content. Optum and Corvallis Clinic are included in the emails and likely have kept all their documents confidential.

Yesterday I shared these documents with several individuals in Corvallis and Portland and did my best to hear comments and concerns.

Multiple comments favoring the acquisition have been received by HCMO in the last few days. Many appear to be identical and assert that the Corvallis Clinic is in immediate jeopardy and will fail if approval is not granted.

HCMO is faced with a difficult decision.

It is unfortunate that neither Optum nor the Clinic have provided financial information demonstrating their immediate need to the Corvallis community.

Given these circumstances, these conditions deserve consideration, but it is unfortunate it comes at the end of the process and requires a public document request to be shared. While the 24 conditions are substantive there are some omissions, confusing terms and other aspects that could be improved. Implementation of these conditions will require considerable cooperation and transparency from 2 organizations that have not been transparent or responsive to the community.

Some suggestions:

- 1) It will be important that OHA release a summary of the Corvallis Clinic financial situation that demonstrates to the community the justification for discounting the significant opposition.
- 2) There is skepticism that many of the conditions will be enforced sufficiently to make a difference. Penalties are not identified. Timing is unclear. UnitedHealth is in court in multiple states for multiple problems as is.
- 3) There is conflicting/confusing language about no compete clauses. It appears that no compete clauses that were already in place under Corvallis Clinic will remain. Existing clinicians should be given a 6-12 month waiver of their no compete that requires 90 day notice to the Clinic and 60 day notice to patients. Item 17 in the order is confusing. It also mentions no competes but appears to only apply to "existing" shareholders.
- 4) Condition 5 seems to intend to prohibit intentional efforts to change the Clinic payer mix but the terms used such as "serves" and "discriminates" seems vague. Corvallis Clinic is believed to have been trying to change payer mix for the last 1-2 years. This is especially true for Medicare. The current payer mix may already be "discriminatory."
- 5) Under fiscal conditions it seems there should be a prohibition on mandated changes in referral mix or patterns especially involving other Optum/United organizations such as home health, hospice. It seems there should be an effort that retains referral patterns if that is a patient preference and/or more convenient.
- 6) Requiring the Monitor be held to a confidentiality agreement seems counter to their position and could undermine their credibility. The most likely source of actionable information will

come from clinicians who will expect the Monitor to inform as needed parties who can take action.

- 7) There is no prohibition on Gag Clauses and there should be especially for non shareholders.
- 8) Enabling Optum to end the Patient and Family Advisory Council at 5 years seems arbitrary. Why not let the Council itself decide if it is worth continuing? I have worked with PFACs all over the country for five years. They all work if you do them right and there are 3 national organizations who can show any organization how to do them right. Have someone who knows about PFACs review this before final decision making.

There are three areas that are not addressed that should be considered:

- 1) OHA should commit to an analysis of existing Optum clinics in Portland and Eugene. These clinics have had time to be converted to Optum systems. We are under the impression that many providers have left these clinics. In some cases, sites have closed. Other quality indicators could have declined. Anticipating that there will be future attempts to acquire Oregon groups by Optum we urge an ongoing analysis be started of all Optum clinics in Oregon. This can and likely should be done using data that can be collected independent of Optum.
- 2) Many remain concerned about the impact of the Blackcat ransomware attack. We don't think the attack is a reason to deny the application, but we do think the decision should be delayed until United can publicly commit to a date when resolution of all the problems will be achieved. Today's Washington Post warns this is now a nationwide problem. The American Hospital Association suggests this may be the largest health care information breach in history. If financial losses at Corvallis Clinic are truly as precarious as stated Optum should prioritize the Clinic and resolve any connections or breach issues first.
- 3) Many are concerned that a substantial part of the transaction resources may go to a small subset of Corvallis Clinic and Optum executives and providers. The public should know this given the health equity issues this will create. Why would the managers of a business about to collapse be rewarded? If such stock purchase is planned it should be disclosed to the public, it should occur only after sufficient time has passed and data has established that the Clinic has returned to stable operations. It should only occur if those individual providers remain at the Clinic at the same level of commitment and only in proportion to the Clinic's ability to pay them. Keeping the community in mind, an equal amount should be donated to the Clinic Foundation for use by the Community to reverse social determinants. OHA has an ambitious goal to reach health by 2030. As the definition used by OHA stresses, health equity is all about the transfer of power and resources. Let's not further slow progress by going the wrong way on this transfer of power and resources.

379. Subject: CorvClinic acquisition

Received 3/8/24

Please do not approve the purchase of the Corvallis Clinic by the for-profit corporation United Healthcare until further research into the propriety and impact of the acquisition and possible alternatives are considered, and a public comment effort has been completed.

Mark Harder

Corvallis

380. Subject: Optum Corvallis Clinic

Received 3/8/24

I hope I am not too late to provide my comments against the Optum acquisition of The Corvallis Clinic which are attached.

Optum Oregon MSO & The Corvallis Clinic

Opposition to Proposed Merger

My name is Linda Krygier. I am a resident of Philomath, Oregon and a long-time patient of The Corvallis Clinic. I retired from a local, non-profit health insurance provider in 2020. Prior to that, I was a business consultant and Senior Director for RSM McGladrey. Overall, my career spanned 30+ years which included over 20 years' experience negotiating and reviewing contracts and advising executives regarding business terms and conditions. It is with this background that I offer the following opposition to and concerns regarding the proposed acquisition of The Corvallis Clinic by Optum Oregon MSO, LLC.

The HCMO summary document describes the proposed deal this way (emphasis added): "Optum Oregon MSO, LLC proposes to **acquire** The Corvallis Clinic. After the **purchase**, Optum Oregon MSO states it would **employ** the current physicians and other providers currently practicing at The Corvallis Clinic."

I have heard some in favor of the acquisition state that the Clinic would retain local control after this transaction. Others insist that Optum is simply acting as an administrative third party and won't have any say in how The Corvallis Clinic treats patients. However, in reviewing the "Responses to Supplemental Information Request Re: Notice of Material Change Transaction involving Optum Oregon and the Corvallis Clinic, Transaction 018 December 22, 2023" I found significant evidence of terms and conditions that would have a profound effect on how The Corvallis Clinic practices medicine in our community. Following is a summary of the most concerning responses and how they could impact care provided by the clinic.

The sections excerpted below are questions and responses under Item #2: "Provide a detailed description of all the administrative and management services Optum Oregon will provide to the Corvallis Clinic under the long-term administrative services agreement."

- a) General Administrative Services. "...real estate management and acquisition"
 - *I interpret this to mean that Optum Oregon LLC would have independent control over the acquisition and divestment of clinic facilities, including closing clinics and practices in unprofitable areas.*
 - *Control over facilities has the potential to impact the services offered, availability of care, and equitable distribution of care.*
- b) Enhancement of Care Delivery. "Optum Oregon shall assist the Corvallis Clinic regarding the assessment of the effects and efficiencies of the network's evolving care delivery model..."
 - *There is a real potential for the Optum Oregon assessment to rely heavily on profit margins and other financial effects and efficiencies rather than patient outcomes and availability of care.*

- c) Billing, Coding, Claims Processing, Accounting and Financial Management Services.
 "...Optum Oregon shall: ... have exclusive authority with respect to the establishment and preparation of the budgets...administer capitation and other distributions from plans...assist the Corvallis Clinic in administering and updating provider incentive compensation systems...provide coding support and billing and processing of claims...perform the purchasing function"
- *Clearly, having exclusive authority with respect to budgets will have a direct impact on treatment options and patient care.*
 - *Administering capitation and other distributions from plans means that Optum is able to influence medical decisions made by medical practitioners based on insurance plan reimbursement policies.*
 - *Any "assistance" that Optum may provide regarding incentive compensation systems is bound to heavily influence treatment decisions.*
 - *"Coding support" is insurance speak for up-coding. It would be in the interests of the parent company, UnitedHealth, if clinic claims included diagnosis codes that make patients appear sicker than they are. This is a tactic encouraged extensively by United Health Care Medicare Advantage plans (and others) as it increases the capitation received from Medicare. I saw an emphasis on and investment in coding reviews during my time working for the health plan.*
 - *Billing and processing claims gives Optum the power to give favorable treatment to insurance plans offered by its parent company, UnitedHealth.*
 - *If Optum is performing the purchasing function, they will have ample opportunity and incentive to favor products and services offered by subsidiary companies such as Optum's Pharmacy Benefit Management services and Change Health's claims and billing service. These decisions have a significant impact on the options available to physicians in treating clinic patients.*
- d) Budgets and Reports. "... assist the Board in establishing policies related to cash investment, tax planning, and other financial policies ...The Board shall retain sole fiduciary responsibility with respect to this Section (d), and shall make all decisions regarding investment and other financial policies.
- *Optum will likely favor policies that provide the best returns to its investors rather than emphasizing local investment in the community.*
- e) Contract Negotiation. "...assist the Corvallis Clinic in negotiating agreements with plans for reimbursement..."
- *Allowing Optum to be involved in negotiating agreements with plans for reimbursement is a clear conflict of interest given the relationship between Optum and United Health Plans.*
- f) Tax Returns. *No concerns*
- g) Claim Settlement. "The Corvallis Clinic acknowledges and agrees that Optum Oregon shall have discretion to compromise, settle, write off or determine not to appeal a denial of any claim for payment for any particular professional service rendered by providers. Further, the Corvallis Clinic agrees to hold harmless Optum Oregon and its officers, members of its board of managers, agents, contractors, representatives and employees, from and against any and all liability, loss, damages, claims, causes of action, and expenses associated therewith (including, without limitation, attorneys' fees) caused or asserted to have been caused, directly or indirectly, by or as a result of any acts, errors or omissions hereunder of Optum Oregon or any of its officers, members of its board of managers, agents, contractors, representatives and employees, in performing Optum Oregon's billing or collection duties hereunder."

- *This response is particularly alarming. Giving Optum the discretion to not pursue a denied insurance claim could be extremely harmful to the financial health of The Corvallis Clinic and represents an open invitation to treat United Health Plans favorably at the expense of the clinic and its patients.*
- *The hold harmless clause in this response is a bright red flag with regards to how Optum is planning to handle claim settlement. Why does Optum feel the need to so vehemently avoid liability when it comes to handling claim denials?*

It seems like UnitedHealth and Optum are causing problems in many communities. An antitrust suit in California alleges that Optum engaged in unfair and unlawful business practices and anticompetitive practices to monopolize care in the local market. Small pharmacies have sued Optum Rx over algorithmic care denials in Medicare Advantage plans. UnitedHealthcare is facing a federal lawsuit over its use of an artificial intelligence tool in making Medicare Advantage claims denials for patients in extended care facilities. A federal judge in North Carolina certified class action status June 5 in a lawsuit alleging Aetna and OptumHealth Care Solutions conspired to use a "dummy code" to make administrative fees appear to be billable medical charges.

Finally, HCMO is currently conducting a follow-up review of the United Health-LHC transaction approved on September 1, 2022. At a minimum, HCMO should wait for this review to be completed before finalizing its review of the Corvallis Clinic acquisition.

381. Subject: Testimony 018 Optum Oregon-The Corvallis Clinic

Received 3/8/24

In light of so many problematic issues surrounding UnitedHealthcare/Optum, attached is my Testimony calling for a needed comprehensive review.

Take Care,

Tom Sincic, MSN, Family Nurse Practitioner-Retired

To: Oregon Health Care Market Oversight Program

RE: Optum Oregon-Corvallis Clinic 018

“Through the Health Care Market Oversight (HCMO) program, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) reviews proposed business deals to make sure they will **help** – and not hurt – Oregon's shared goals of health equity, lower consumer costs, increased access, and better care.”

The key words are “make sure they will help”.

1. Does the documentation/evidence provided to date clearly show that this acquisition will advance the goal of health equity?
2. Does the documentation/evidence clearly show that this acquisition will lower consumer costs?
3. Does the documentation/evidence show that this acquisition will result in better care?

Given the current information, the answers are not yet there. Based on reports and studies from around the country regarding similar acquisitions the answer is “no” to all three with the possibility that it could actually “hurt”.

“UnitedHealth faces class action lawsuit over algorithmic care denials in Medicare Advantage plans”, <https://www.statnews.com/2023/11/14/unitedhealth-class-action-lawsuit-algorithm-medicare-advantage/>

“UnitedHealthcare Tried to Deny Coverage to a Chronically Ill Patient”
<https://www.propublica.org/article/unitedhealth-healthcare-insurance-denial-ulcerative-colitis>

And now the issues with UnitedHealth/OPTUM cyberattack delaying payments and preventing people from getting needed medications.

The only real chance to get these questions answered is to conduct a comprehensive review. Included in this review could be an evaluation of the results of previous acquisitions in terms of equity, cost, and care.

In addition, I am adding my previously submitted testimony from last January. (Below)

“It is time to be very clear. This is a health insurance proposition and therefore Oregon’s Department of Consumer and Business Services must be involved in reviewing this transaction.

From Optum’s website <https://www.optum.com/about-us.html>

The infographic consists of four columns, each with an icon and text. The first column has a building icon and the text "Founded in April 2011". The second column has a circular icon with three dots and the text "Division of UnitedHealth Group". The third column has a location pin icon and the text "Headquarters in Eden Prairie, Minnesota". The fourth column has a circular icon with four dots and the text "310,000 employees worldwide".

Yes, Optum is a Division of UnitedHealth Group and a worldwide company which also has UnitedHealthcare.

[From https://www.unitedhealthgroup.com/people-and-businesses/businesses/unitedhealthcare.html](https://www.unitedhealthgroup.com/people-and-businesses/businesses/unitedhealthcare.html)

UnitedHealthcare: Health care coverage and benefits

UnitedHealthcare offers a full range of health benefits, enabling affordable coverage, simplifying the health care experience and delivering access to high-quality care. UnitedHealthcare serves customers through four businesses: Employer & Individual, Medicare & Retirement, Community & State, and Global.

Any review of a subsidiary must include the parent company and in this case the parent is a huge health insurance company. The public deserves to know what kind of a company UnitedHealth Group is and how it makes decisions related to its subsidiaries. There are many questions to be answered regarding the overall financial and health equity impacts of this proposal. DCBS has the expertise to review health insurance companies and must be involved.

There is no scenario in which the Optum structure and decisions are not in direct relationship with UnitedHealthcare to help maximize use of and the profits of the insurance arm of UnitedHealth Group for the overall benefit of UnitedHealth Group.

Awareness of UnitedHealth Group's presence as a conglomerate trying to enrich itself through multiple pathways in Oregon is essential. UnitedHealth's additional filing in the United-Amedisys proposal to takeover home healthcare along with their presence as a PBM in CareOregon and the pre-HCMO takeover of Oregon Medical Group and GreenField Health shows how deep in Oregon they already are.

Just go to UnitedHealth Group home page <https://www.unitedhealthgroup.com/> or <https://www.unitedhealthgroup.com/people-and-businesses/businesses/optum.html> to see more.

Again, this structure makes it imperative that DCBS be a part of a comprehensive review."

Tom Sincic, MSN, FNP Retired

Portland, OR

About HCMO

The Health Care 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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