



TINA KOTEK  
GOVERNOR

March 17, 2026

James McGovern, M.D.  
Chief Hospital Executive, Oregon Network  
PeaceHealth  
3333 Riverbend Drive  
Springfield, OR 97477  
*sent via email*

RE: Emergency Department Transition

Dear Dr. McGovern,

PeaceHealth has served the community for nearly a century, and Oregonians need PeaceHealth to be a well-staffed, high functioning health care provider in Lane County and the surrounding region. As you know, RiverBend serves as the primary Level II trauma center. To have future success, PeaceHealth must foster trust and demonstrate a commitment to transparency for the people they serve. I am deeply concerned that PeaceHealth's current approach to emergency department staffing changes seriously undermines these goals.

As I shared last week, I am frustrated by the lack of transparency concerning your proposed emergency department (ED) changes, especially considering previous conversations my administration had with PeaceHealth regarding community partnership during the University District ED closure. I am also worried that the sporadic and in-development nature of administrative agreements between ApolloMD, Lane Emergency Physicians, and PeaceHealth will result in serious disruption and deterioration of ED services at PeaceHealth locations.

I am therefore requesting a delay of your planned transition, at minimum to allow for another 180 days to ensure adequate staffing with providers who reside in and are committed to the community and to allow more time to develop public understanding and to restore trust. I am also requesting that PeaceHealth work with Eugene Emergency Physicians to extend their contract and retain adequate staffing in support of an immediate delay. My office stands ready to convene partners upon PeaceHealth's commitment to meet these requests.

Additionally, I am requesting PeaceHealth release the request for proposal (RFP) for a new ED staffing contract to the public by Friday, March 20. If proposals cannot be shared due to signed disclosure limitations, then PeaceHealth should release the RFP scoring criteria and the scores given to the applicants.

PeaceHealth's many accomplishments and accreditations for overall quality and safety are because of your current providers, not in spite of them. If there are administrative efficiencies and structural changes that can occur now to alleviate the capacity issues at RiverBend, then it is in the best interest of your total workforce and the community to re-examine those changes with Eugene Emergency Physicians and determine if a shared, accelerated path can be crafted to achieve necessary outcomes.

254 STATE CAPITOL, SALEM OR 97301-4047 (503) 378-4582 FAX (503) 378-8970

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I have concerns about the long-term use of temporary physicians (locum tenens) and PeaceHealth's preparedness in the event of a disaster in the region. I am troubled by the likely consequence of PeaceHealth's actions leading to the loss of quality physicians from the area. This will have a long-term effect on a region already impacted by major health care disruption and provider decline.

We have seen elsewhere in the state how planned staffing changes result in serious delay and disruption despite confident assurances from administrators.

We can look to a different hospital's transition to a new anesthesiology firm. Hundreds of planned surgeries were postponed due to the contractor's inability to serve the hospital's known volume. This resulted in anger, distrust, and real impact to patients' lives. In an ED, there is no room for error. Based on the likelihood of an increased incidence of diverted patients, I am requesting that PeaceHealth coordinate with neighboring hospitals now to mitigate impacts across the region. Please provide the Oregon Health Authority with an update of your efforts by Friday, March 20. Please also understand that sustained incidence of diversion is an indication of inadequate capacity at the ED and a possible violation of a hospital's license to maintain adequate staffing.

My office has requested weekly updates from the Oregon Medical Board to track locum tenens stated service dates, estimated duration of service in the region, and new license applications to monitor whether an adequate number of physicians will in fact be available to PeaceHealth based on PeaceHealth's stated goal to maintain current physician ratios. I encourage PeaceHealth and its contractors to establish key staffing thresholds prior to the first date of service and make progress towards those efforts publicly available.

Furthermore, state agencies are actively reviewing PeaceHealth's response to the Health Care Market Oversight (HCMO) program's proactive questions and ApolloMD's Senate Bill 951 response. You should anticipate additional questions, and I will expect your prompt reply.

As mentioned in our discussion, I have requested a review of all options available to me to ensure adequate staffing of ED services in the region due to the lack of transparency and confidence in PeaceHealth's plan to date. I urge PeaceHealth to reconsider the rushed nature of this significant contract change and delay actions to allow for a more thoughtful approach to sustainable staffing that meets your emergency department needs.

Sincerely,



Governor Tina Kotek