



The Oregon Medical Association (OMA) represents and advocates for more than 7,000 physicians, physician associates, and medical and PA students across Oregon. Our mission is to support our members in their efforts to practice medicine effectively, improve the health of Oregonians, and provide the highest quality patient care.

OMA's members are concerned about the recent transition of emergency medicine services at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center and the decision not to renew the long-standing contract with Eugene Emergency Physicians.

At its core, this issue is about patients and community stability.

Emergency departments are the front door of the healthcare system. They serve everyone, regardless of insurance status, ability to pay, or time of day. For many Oregonians, particularly those facing barriers to primary or behavioral health care, the emergency department is not simply a point of access, it is the safety net.

For more than three decades, Eugene Emergency Physicians have provided care in this community. Long-standing physician groups develop institutional knowledge, trusted relationships with hospital staff and specialists, and a deep understanding of local referral patterns and community needs. That continuity contributes to quality, efficiency, and patient trust.

Transitions of this magnitude raise important questions:

- How will continuity of care be maintained during staffing changes?
- How will recruitment and retention be managed in a system already facing workforce shortages?
- What safeguards are in place to protect patient care during periods of disruption?
- How will long-term community accountability be preserved?

While it is not our place to take a position on the specific contractual negotiations that led to this transition, we recognize that hospitals operate in an increasingly complex financial and regulatory environment. However, changes that significantly affect frontline physician staffing should always be evaluated through the lens of patient impact and community health.

The Eugene-Springfield region has experienced considerable healthcare disruption in recent years, including hospital closures and primary care instability. Additional transitions in core hospital services heighten concerns about access, workforce sustainability, and the strain on remaining clinicians.

Across Oregon, communities are grappling with:

- Emergency department boarding

- Behavioral health system gaps
- Specialist shortages
- Rural access challenges
- Burnout and workforce attrition

In this environment, stability matters.

OMA supports models of care that prioritize patient outcomes, clinician accountability to the communities they serve, and long-term investment in local healthcare systems. We encourage transparent communication with medical staff, community leaders, and policymakers to ensure that transitions in care delivery strengthen — rather than destabilize — patient access.

Our concern is not with individual clinicians, whether long-standing or newly recruited. Clinicians entering this community deserve support and goodwill. Our concern is with maintaining continuity, trust, and quality during periods of structural change.

OMA will continue to monitor this situation and remain available to facilitate constructive dialogue among physicians, hospital systems, and policymakers. Our shared goal must remain clear: ensuring that the patients of Eugene and surrounding communities receive stable, high-quality, and accessible emergency care — now and in the future.

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