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Contact: Katy Konkol
Senior Marketing and Communications Manager
kkonkel@aaem.org
Phone: 800-884-2236

AAEM Backs Lawsuit Challenging PeaceHealth ED Staffing Deal as Governor Calls for Delay

Milwaukee, WI, April 6, 2026 — The American Academy of Emergency Medicine (AAEM) is backing a lawsuit filed by Eugene Emergency Physicians (EEP) seeking to block PeaceHealth's planned transition to a new emergency department staffing company in Eugene, Oregon. Support for the legal effort will be provided, in part, through the [AAEM Foundation](#).

The lawsuit alleges the proposed arrangement violates Oregon law designed to limit corporate control of medical decision-making and reinforce physician-led care. The case comes amid escalating concerns from state leaders, including Governor Tina Kotek, who has called for the transition to be delayed over patient safety and legal compliance. Despite those concerns, PeaceHealth has indicated it intends to proceed.

For more than 30 years, local emergency physicians have cared for patients presenting to these emergency departments. Under the proposed transition, those physicians would be replaced by a national staffing group, raising concerns about who ultimately controls decisions that will affect the care patients receive in the emergency department.

Concerns about corporate influence in healthcare are not theoretical. A recent U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report found that consolidation and corporate involvement in healthcare reduce transparency, shift decision-making away from physicians, and create incentives that may not align with patient-centered care.

AAEM believes that increasing corporate influence in the delivery of healthcare can undermine physician autonomy and the patient-physician relationship. As healthcare systems become more consolidated and operational control shifts away from practicing physicians, decisions that affect patient outcomes may be influenced by financial and administrative priorities rather than clinical judgment.

AAEM stated that the case could become one of the first major tests of Oregon's efforts to restrict corporate influence in medicine and warned that the implications extend beyond a single community.

"If this moves forward despite a pending lawsuit and a governor's request to stop, it sends a clear signal," said Robert Frolichstein, MD FAAEM, President of AAEM. "It tells hospital systems and staffing companies across the country that these laws can be pushed aside. That is not just an Oregon issue. This is a national one."

AAEM confirmed that resources from the AAEM Foundation will be used to support the legal effort as the case proceeds through the courts.

"Emergency physicians in Eugene are standing up for their patients, and they are doing it in real time," said Frolichstein. "Legal fights like this require resources, and we stand with physicians who take that fight on."

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About the American Academy of Emergency Medicine

The [American Academy of Emergency Medicine](#) (AAEM) is the specialty society of emergency medicine and the champion of the emergency physician. Established in 1993, AAEM promotes fair and equitable practice environments necessary to allow emergency physicians to deliver the highest quality of patient care. Its guiding values are embodied in its [mission and vision](#).

About the AAEM Foundation

The AAEM Foundation is the philanthropic arm of AAEM and supports research, education, and advocacy initiatives that advance emergency medicine and protect the patient-physician relationship.

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF EMERGENCY MEDICINE
555 East Wells Street, Suite 1100, Milwaukee, WI 53202
(800) 884-2236 | info@aaem.org | www.aaem.org