



January 30, 2023

Professional Distinction

Personal Dignity

Patient Advocacy

Representative Stephenson, Chair, Commerce Finance and Policy Committee  
Representative Liebling, Chair, Health Finance and Policy Committee  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Chair Stephenson, Chair Liebling, and Members of the Committees,

With over 22,000 members, the Minnesota Nurses Association (MNA) is the leading organization representing professional nursing across Minnesota. As leaders in labor and health care, we are a voice for hospital nurses across the state on issues related to the health and well-being of the public.

We thank you for holding today’s hearing to discuss this important topic. We are also thankful to Representative Bierman for introducing legislation to put much needed guiderails on mergers and acquisitions of taxpayer-supported health care systems such as the merger between Sanford and Fairview Health.

Nurses have one primary concern: to ensure quality care for patients, which starts at the bedside and extends into our communities. Corporate mergers and healthcare monopolies not only increase costs for patients but also result in reductions of services provided and closures of community hospitals and clinics. For many, removing access to healthcare services can be downright disastrous for those who need care locally in their community.

MNA also has concerns about the future of collective bargaining agreements at all hospitals affected by the merger. Studies show that patients are safer when unions are present. But history shows us that companies from right-to-work states, such as Sanford is, will go to great lengths to prevent or remove unions from the equation. This penalizes both workers and patients.

Lastly, MNA has concerns about the Sanford takeover of Fairview as it relates to Sanford’s history, policies, and practices when it comes to reproductive health care and abortion services. As a company, Sanford does not provide what they deem “elective” abortion services and instead bases their policies and practices around South Dakota law – which has turned back the clock on the rights of those who could become pregnant. This is troubling, particularly when considering the dialogue and progress being made elsewhere at the Legislature. Sanford’s own lack of clarity around this issue only adds to concerns around reproductive health, abortion services, and questions pertaining to equity and access.

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For those reasons, and more, MNA continues to oppose the Sanford-Fairview merger. This merger will harm the communities we serve. Healthcare should be about patients, not profits.

Shannon Cunningham  
Director of Governmental and Community Relations  
Minnesota Nurses Association