



March 7, 2023

Professional Distinction

Personal Dignity

Patient Advocacy

Senator Melissa Wiklund, Chair, Health and Human Services Committee  
Minnesota Senate  
95 University Ave. W.  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Chair Wiklund and Members of the Committee,

With over 22,000 members, the Minnesota Nurses Association (MNA) is the leading organization representing professional nursing across Minnesota. As leaders in labor and healthcare, 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 time for this committee to learn more about this important topic. Corporate mergers and healthcare monopolies not only increase costs for patients but also fewer healthcare services provided and even closures of community hospitals and clinics – regardless of who needs care locally. It is also important to point out that this particular proposed transaction would actually be more of a take-over than a merger, as Sanford would effectively absorb the M Health system – as it has done similarly elsewhere.

MNA also has concerns about the future of collective bargaining agreements at all hospitals affected by the merger. Unionized hospital staff help provide for more worker safeguards in the industry, and while studies show that patients are safer when unions are present. Unfortunately, companies from right-to-work states, such as South Dakota-based Sanford, will go to great lengths to prevent or remove unions from the equation. This harms nurses and patients.

MNA is also troubled by the possibility of a Sanford take-over of Fairview due to Sanford's practices and history pertaining to reproductive health care and gender-affirming care. We are concerned that this transaction would have negative consequences for the health outcomes of many Minnesotans, including women, the LGBTQ community, and lower-income Minnesotans.

Healthcare should be about patients, not profits. Allowing this transaction to move forward would harm the communities currently served by the impacted hospitals, and it would result in further consolidation within one of the most consolidated state health systems in the country. We hope the legislature and other state leaders will do whatever is necessary to stop this merger.

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