

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:  
APPROPRIATIONS  
COMMERCE  
HEALTH, EDUCATION,  
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

August 14, 2025

Daniel W. Jackson  
President and Chief Executive Officer, Ascension Wisconsin  
400 W. River Woods Parkway  
Glendale, Wisconsin 53212

Dear Mr. Jackson,

I write to you regarding Ascension Wisconsin's plans to outsource staffing of Milwaukee-area intensive care units to TeamHealth, a private equity-backed firm with a history of business practices that compromise patient care and safety. According to reporting in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel this week, Ascension Wisconsin plans to end its contracts with local groups of critical care physicians and switch to TeamHealth, a company owned by the private equity giant Blackstone. I am concerned that Ascension's cost-cutting measures will once again come at the expense of patients and will leave Milwaukee hospitals' intensive care units without enough physicians to care for some of the area's sickest patients, including those recovering from major surgery or severe burns. I ask that you put patients first and reconsider Ascension Wisconsin's partnership with TeamHealth.

In February 2023, I sent a letter to Joseph Impicciche, Chief Executive Officer of Ascension, raising concerns about the health system's practices following reporting in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and Milwaukee Magazine about cuts to critical programs and other decisions that put patients and providers at risk. In my letter, I raised concerns that Ascension Health System is operating like a private equity fund—squeezing staff, closing facilities, and extracting cash from its member hospitals for dubious “management fees,” all to advance its investment activities and provide compensation to its executives. I found this to be in stark contrast to Ascension's non-profit mission. Unfortunately, it seems my concerns continue to be justified, as Ascension Wisconsin is now deciding to outsource critical physician staffing to a private equity-backed firm with a concerning track record. You are choosing to do business with a firm that has drawn intense scrutiny and litigation over its staffing practices and allegations of improper billing, overcharging patients to the point of fraud. Physicians in Milwaukee are sounding the alarm about reduced staffing levels and overreliance on electronic intensive care units, and I urge you to heed their warnings about patients care and safety.

TeamHealth is a Tennessee-based physician staffing group. The company was acquired by Blackstone in 2017. For years, the company engaged in widespread surprise billing before Congress banned the practice. TeamHealth has a long history of allegations of overcharging patients, including running up patient costs with medically unnecessary tests, as well as submitting claims for more costly services than provided. This would not be the first time Ascension decided to trade local provider physician groups for TeamHealth. I understand that Ascension St. John Hospital in Detroit ended their contract with TeamHealth last summer. I would ask that you consider that if TeamHealth was not good enough for hospitals in Detroit, they are not a good plan for hospitals and your patients in Milwaukee.

I request a response in writing to the following questions and requests for information in order to better understand Ascension Wisconsin's operations, including its planned partnership with TeamHealth.

1. Please provide a detailed staffing plan for Ascension Wisconsin ICUs including the following information:
  - a. Will staffing levels be reduced at any hospital ICU? If so, which hospitals?
  - b. How will Ascension Wisconsin prioritize patient care and safety under this staffing plan?
  - c. Who will staff hospital ICUs, local physicians or physicians located outside the state?
  - d. Does TeamHealth plan to implement electronic ICUs? If so, how will Ascension Wisconsin mitigate the increased risk associated with reliance on electronic ICUs?
2. Please provide Ascension Wisconsin's contract with TeamHealth
3. How does Ascension Wisconsin plan to hold TeamHealth accountable given the company's history of staffing practices that compromise patient care and fraudulent billing methods?

I look forward to hearing back from you before Ascension Wisconsin's transition to TeamHealth is implemented.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tammy Baldwin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tammy" and last name "Baldwin" clearly distinguishable.

Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator