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PHYSICIANS FORM ASSOCIATION FOR INDEPENDENT MEDICINE:

Anesthesiologists from three states have formed the Association for Independent Medicine (AIM) to keep physician-owned medical practices independent, bucking the trend of private equity-funded groups taking over practices, the new Naperville-based organization said in a statement.

The nonprofit association was founded by nearly 400 anesthesiologists who are members of Midwest Anesthesia Partners in Naperville, Anesthesia Management Services in Commerce Township, Mich., Mid-Continent Anesthesiology Chartered in Wichita, Kan. and Anesthesia Practice Consultants in Grand Rapids, Michigan

AIM is based "on the principle that maintaining physician control of health care decision-making results in the highest quality of care for patients and most efficient use of healthcare resources," the statement said.

It will support physicians who want to remain independent by providing information, education and political advocacy.

The group cites a May 2021 report by the American Medical Association that shows, for the first time, less than 50% of patient-care physicians work for physician-owned practices.

"Our first charge as physicians is to provide patient care to the best of our abilities. When corporate medicine takes over, physicians lose their decision-making abilities, leading to a decrease in patient care options which may negatively impact outcomes," Dr. Marco Fernandez, an anesthesiologist and president of Midwest Anesthesia Partners, said in the statement. "Groups bought out by private equity are typically forced to follow the corporate owner's guidelines set in place, which frequently include less time allowed for physicians to spend with each patient, reduced billing reimbursements by insurance companies and increased hours worked by physicians."