

The Honorable Jeff Jackson
Attorney General of North Carolina
North Carolina Department of Justice
P.O. Box 629
Raleigh, NC 27602

Wednesday, October 14, 2026

Subject: Public hearings on proposed Atrium-WakeMed deal

Dear Attorney General Jackson,

On behalf of patients and members of organizations listed below, we write to request that your office open and pursue rigorous investigation of the proposed takeover of WakeMed by Atrium Health, and hold community forums to hear directly from the people across our state and particularly in Wake County about how this proposed takeover will affect our lives.

Our concerns are twofold: the transaction could reduce competition and raise prices, and the county's review left patients, workers, and community members without timely access to important information or a meaningful opportunity to be heard.

The Wake County Board of Commissioners voted on September 21, 2026, in a fraught and rushed process, to allow the WakeMed takeover by Atrium Health to proceed. This deal is likely to raise our healthcare costs, negatively affect working conditions for nurses and other hospital staff, and undermine the community benefits such as charity care that WakeMed is known for providing.

The concerns we have about the effects of this agreement on healthcare prices in Wake County and across NC are concrete. In a September interview with WRAL, WakeMed CEO Donald Gintzig was asked whether prices would rise if the transaction went through and answered, "I hope so." The NC State Health Plan's executive administrator, Thomas Friedman, separately estimated that if WakeMed's rates rose to Atrium's current levels, premiums could increase by \$84 to \$132 per year for each policyholder.

The county's review left the public without timely access to important information about basic terms of the proposed transaction. For example, about one hour before County Commissioners voted on the deal, the Wake County Attorney revealed that one of Atrium's powers as "sole member" of WakeMed would be to fire WakeMed's CEO at will—a crucial fact that was never shared during months of public debate. The public record also leaves basic questions about the price cap and Atrium's \$2 billion commitment unanswered, including how the cap will be calculated and monitored and what funds will count toward Atrium's investment.

The timing of the vote and the parties' access to commissioners raise further concerns about the fairness of the process. We now know that the date of the final vote was chosen just minutes after

the Commission received an ultimatum from Atrium CEO Gene Woods that “the time has come to move from discussion to decision.” Many changes to the deal were made in the days before the final vote, and concessions negotiated by Governor Stein had not even been written down when the Commissioners voted. The CEOs and attorneys of Atrium and WakeMed had almost unfettered access to the Wake County Commissioners, while a request for a meeting with the Commissioners from a broad coalition of patient, worker, and community groups was ignored.

In recognition of the significant impact this takeover would have on the cost of healthcare for patients across the state and the flawed nature of this process, we ask your office to **hold public meetings before completing its review**. Patients, healthcare workers, employers and residents deserve an opportunity to examine the actual terms of the deal, and to learn how this transaction could affect prices, competition, and access to care. Our coalition has identified those competitive effects, as well as the unfinished commitments, as reasons for a public hearing.

Before those meetings, please obtain and make public, to the fullest extent permitted by law:

1. The final, enforceable price-cap language, including how the cap will be calculated, when its five-year term begins and how compliance will be monitored.
2. The final, enforceable \$2 billion commitment, including the sources of funding, the spending schedule and safeguards ensuring that WakeMed’s own revenue or borrowing is not counted as Atrium’s investment.
3. The process by which Atrium was selected, and whether other bids were seriously considered.
4. An independent assessment of the transaction’s likely effects on prices, competition and patient access.

There is precedent for state Attorneys General holding public meetings or community forums as part of their review processes of hospital consolidation transactions. For example, Minnesota’s Attorney General held such [meetings](#) this year and Rhode Island’s has [made merger applications available to the public](#) and held [similar meetings](#) over the years.

Further consolidation by one of the largest and most expensive healthcare systems in the state demands close scrutiny.

Sincerely,

The Patients Union
State Employees Association of North Carolina
NC Justice Center
Raleigh-Apex NAACP
Men of Southeast Raleigh
Triangle Central Labor Council
NC Poor People’s Campaign
Communication Workers of America NC