Force Render to Use Node Runtime

Problem

Render is showing “Docker” as runtime even after removing Dockerfile.

Why This Happens

When a service is **first created** in Render with a Dockerfile, Render permanently sets it as a “Docker” service. Simply removing the Dockerfile doesn’t change the service type.

Solution Options

Option 1: Delete and Recreate Service (Recommended) ⭐

This is the cleanest solution but requires reconfiguring environment variables.

Steps:

1. Backup Environment Variables (2 min)
- Go to Render dashboard: https://dashboard.render.com
- Select “carelinkai” service
- Go to “Environment” tab
- Copy all environment variables to a safe place (text file or notepad)

2. Delete the Service (1 min)
- Go to “Settings” tab
- Scroll to bottom
- Click “Delete Web Service”
- Confirm deletion

3. Create New Service (5 min)
- Click “New +” → “Web Service”
- Connect to GitHub repository: `profyt7/carelinkai`
- Render will auto-detect Node runtime (no Dockerfile exists)
- Configure:
- **Name**: `carelinkai`
- **Region**: Oregon (US West)
- **Branch**: `main`
- **Runtime**: **Node** (should be auto-detected)
- **Build Command**: `npm install && npx prisma generate && npm run build`
- **Start Command**: `npm start`
- **Instance Type**: Starter

4. Add Environment Variables (3 min)
- Paste all environment variables from backup
- Essential variables include:
- `DATABASE_URL`
- `NEXTAUTH_SECRET`
- `NEXTAUTH_URL`

- `OPENAI_API_KEY`
- All SMTP_ variables
- All TWILIO_ variables
- All CLOUDINARY_* variables
- `CRON_SECRET`

5. Deploy (5-10 min)
- Click “Create Web Service”
- Wait for deployment
- Verify runtime shows “Node” in dashboard

Option 2: Contact Render Support 👍

If you don’t want to delete and recreate:

1. Go to Render dashboard
2. Click the chat icon (bottom right)
3. Ask: “Please change my service ‘carelinkai’ (ID: srv-d3isol3uibrs73d5fm1g) from Docker runtime to Node runtime”
4. Wait for support response (usually 1-2 hours)

Option 3: Use Render Blueprint (render.yaml) ❓

We’ve added a `render.yaml` file that explicitly specifies Node runtime. However, this might not work for existing services that were created as Docker services.

- The `render.yaml` file is now in the repository
- Render might respect it on next deployment
- If not, you’ll need Option 1 or 2

Verification

After changing to Node runtime, you should see:

```
✅ Runtime: Node
✅ Node Version: 20.x
✅ Build Time: 5-10 minutes (not 60-120 minutes)
✅ Smaller build size (~200MB vs ~500MB)
```

Important Notes

- **Downtime**: Deleting and recreating will cause ~10 minutes of downtime
- **Environment Variables**: Make sure to backup all env vars before deleting
- **Database**: Your database (carelinkai-db) is separate and won’t be affected
- **Redis**: Your Redis (carelinkai-redis) is separate and won’t be affected

- **Domain**: You might need to reconfigure custom domain if you have one
- **Deploy Hooks**: The deploy hook will be regenerated

Current Status

Item	Status
Runtime	❌ Docker (slow, inefficient)
Should be	✅ Node (fast, efficient)
Dockerfile	✅ Removed from repository
Dockerfile.backup	✅ Removed from repository
render.yaml	✅ Added with Node configuration

Recommendation

Delete and recreate the service - it's the fastest and most reliable solution.

Why?

- Guaranteed to work
- Only 10-15 minutes total time
- Future deployments will be **10-20x faster**
- Lower costs (smaller builds, less memory)
- Clean slate with proper configuration

Need Help?

If you need assistance with the migration process, let me know and I can guide you through each step!