

**FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM****Formations of, Acquisitions by, and Mergers of Bank Holding Companies**

The companies listed in this notice have applied to the Board for approval, pursuant to the Bank Holding Company Act of 1956 (12 U.S.C. 1841 *et seq.*) (BHC Act), Regulation Y (12 CFR Part 225), and all other applicable statutes and regulations to become a bank holding company and/or to acquire the assets or the ownership of, control of, or the power to vote shares of a bank or bank holding company and all of the banks and nonbanking companies owned by the bank holding company, including the companies listed below.

The applications listed below, as well as other related filings required by the Board, are available for immediate inspection at the Federal Reserve Bank indicated. The application also will be available for inspection at the offices of the Board of Governors. Interested persons may express their views in writing on the standards enumerated in the BHC Act (12 U.S.C. 1842(c)). If the proposal also involves the acquisition of a nonbanking company, the review also includes whether the acquisition of the nonbanking company complies with the standards in section 4 of the BHC Act (12 U.S.C. 1843). Unless otherwise noted, nonbanking activities will be conducted throughout the United States. Additional information on all bank holding companies may be obtained from the National Information Center Web site at [www.ffiec.gov/nic/](http://www.ffiec.gov/nic/).

Unless otherwise noted, comments regarding each of these applications must be received at the Reserve Bank indicated or the offices of the Board of Governors not later than December 6, 2002.

**A. Federal Reserve Bank of New York** (Betsy Buttrill White, Senior Vice President) 33 Liberty Street, New York, New York 10045-0001:

*1. Bridge Street Financial, Inc.*, Oswego, New York; to become a bank holding company by acquiring 100 percent of the voting shares of Oswego County National Bank, Oswego, New York.

Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, November 5, 2002.

**Robert deV. Frierson,**

*Deputy Secretary of the Board.*

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**FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION****Public Hearings: Health Care and Competition Law and Policy**

**AGENCY:** Federal Trade Commission.

**ACTION:** Notice of public hearings and opportunity for comment.

**SUMMARY:** The Federal Trade Commission ("FTC" or "Commission") announces it will hold approximately twenty-five days of hearings, beginning in February 2003, on the subject of "Health Care and Competition Law and Policy." The Commission held a two-day workshop on health care and competition law and policy on September 9–10, 2002. That workshop demonstrated the range and complexity of issues arising from the intersection of health care and competition law and policy (including consumer protection law and policy), and revealed a diversity of views on the appropriate role and priorities for the Commission and other law enforcement agencies in this important area of the economy.

The Commission has determined that further inquiry will help inform the framing and implementation of competition law and policy as applied to health care. The hearings will focus in greater depth on some of the issues raised during the September 2002 workshop, and will also review and analyze the application of competition law and policy to health care more broadly. The hearings may consider a range of subjects, including, but not limited to, hospital mergers, geographic and product markets (including issues unique to rural health care markets), the significance of non-profit provider status, the issues raised by competition from allied health professions, vertical arrangements, and the *Noerr-Pennington* and state action doctrines. The hearings also will explore competitive effects of explicit and implicit contracts for quality, complexities of measuring and disseminating information about health care quality, the impact of existing and anticipated institutional arrangements for the purchase, financing, and delivery of health care services on the cost, quality and availability of such care, and incentives for innovation in health care markets. Finally, the hearings will examine the implications of the Commission's consumer protection mandate with regard to the performance of health care markets, including, but not limited to, the disclosure of costs, risks, and benefits by manufacturers of medical devices and pharmaceuticals (both prescription and over-the-counter), and by providers of professional services in connection with

advertising and other forms of information dissemination.

As was noted in the **Federal Register** notice for the September 2002 workshop, the Commission has considerable experience in the application of competition law and policy to health care.<sup>1</sup> The 2003 hearings will assist the Commission by providing timely information from varying perspectives on how competition law and policy affects health care markets and consumer/patient welfare. The goal is to promote dialogue, learning, and consensus building among all interested parties (including, but not limited to, the business, consumer, government, legal, provider, insurer, and health policy/health services/health economics communities). In addition to officials from the FTC, representatives of the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services, state attorneys general, providers, academics, consumer representatives, employers, insurers, managed care organizations, and a wide array of other groups will be invited to participate.

The hearings will be held at and administered by the FTC and co-hosted with the Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice. A report will be prepared based on the information obtained at the hearings.

**DATES:** Specific dates for the hearings will be announced shortly, along with a preliminary agenda. It is anticipated that a full week of hearings will be held during February 2003, with additional dates scheduled during March through October 2003, totaling approximately twenty-five days of hearings. Any interested person may submit written comments responsive to any of the topics addressed during the hearings. Comments directed at a particular subject considered during a particular session of hearings must be submitted no later than 45 days after the date of that specific hearing session. Comments on broader subjects within the general scope of the hearings may be submitted at any time after the publication of this notice, but no later than November 28, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** When in session, the majority of the hearings will be held in Room 432 at the FTC headquarters, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC. If it is determined that a hearing needs to take place outside of Washington, DC, a notice of the change

<sup>1</sup> Federal Trade Commission, "Notice of Public Workshop and Opportunity For Comment," 67 FR 47365 (July 18, 2002), available at <http://www.ftc.gov/os/2002/07/healthcarefrn.htm>.