

*Total Annual Burden:* 6.3 hours.

*General Description of Collection:* An insured nonmember bank or a subsidiary of such a bank that functions as a transfer agent may withdraw from registration as a transfer agent by filing a written notice of withdrawal with the FDIC as provided by 12 CFR 341.5.

3. *Title:* Notification of Performance of Bank Services.

*OMB Number:* 3064-0029.

*Form:* Notification of Performance of Bank Services FDIC Form 6120/06.

*Frequency of Response:* On occasion.

*Affected Public:* Business or other financial institutions.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 412.

*Estimated Time per Response:* .5 hours.

*Total Annual Burden:* 206 hours.

*General Description of Collection:* Insured state nonmember banks are required to notify the FDIC, under section 7 of the Bank Service Corporation Act (12 U.S.C. 1867), of the relationship with a bank service corporation. Form FDIC 6120/06 (Notification of Performance of Bank Services) may be used by banks to satisfy the notification requirement.

4. *Title:* Summary of Deposits.

*OMB Number:* 3064-0061.

*Form:* Summary of Deposits FDIC Form 8020/05.

*Frequency of Response:* Annually.

*Affected Public:* All insured financial institutions.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 6,000.

*Average Estimated Time per Response:* 3 hours.

*Total Annual Burden:* 18,000 hours.

*General Description of Collection:* The Summary of Deposits annual survey obtains data about the amount of deposits held at each office of all insured banks with branches in the United States. The survey data provides a basis for measuring the competitive impact of bank mergers and has additional use in banking research.

#### Request for Comment

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether these collections of information are necessary for the proper performance of the FDIC's functions, including whether the information has practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the estimate of the burden of the information collections, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the information collections on respondents, including through the use

of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology. All comments will become a matter of public record.

Dated at Washington, DC, this 8th day of August 2005.

Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

**Robert E. Feldman,**

*Executive Secretary.*

[FR Doc. 05-15964 Filed 8-11-05; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 6714-01-P**

#### FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

[File No. 041-0100]

#### Partners Health Network, Inc.; Analysis of Agreement Containing Consent Order To Aid Public Comment

**AGENCY:** Federal Trade Commission.

**ACTION:** Proposed consent agreement.

**SUMMARY:** The consent agreement in this matter settles alleged violations of Federal law prohibiting unfair or deceptive acts or practices or unfair methods of competition. The attached Analysis to Aid Public Comment describes both the allegations in the draft complaint and the terms of the consent order—embodied in the consent agreement—that would settle these allegations.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before September 3, 2005.

**ADDRESSES:** Interested parties are invited to submit written comments. Comments should refer to "Partners Health Network, Inc., *et al.*, File No. 041 0100," to facilitate the organization of comments. A comment filed in paper form should include this reference both in the text and on the envelope, and should be mailed or delivered to the following address: Federal Trade Commission/Office of the Secretary, Room 135-H, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20580. Comments containing confidential material must be filed in paper form, must be clearly labeled "Confidential," and must comply with Commission Rule 4.9(c). 16 CFR 4.9(c) (2005).<sup>1</sup> The FTC is requesting that any comment filed in paper form be sent by courier or overnight service, if possible, because U.S. postal mail in the Washington area and at the Commission is subject to

<sup>1</sup> The comment must be accompanied by an explicit request for confidential treatment, including the factual and legal basis for the request, and must identify the specific portions of the comment to be withheld from the public record. The request will be granted or denied by the Commission's General Counsel, consistent with applicable law and the public interest. See Commission Rule 4.9(c), 16 CFR 4.9(c).

delay due to heightened security precautions. Comments that do not contain any nonpublic information may instead be filed in electronic form as part of or as an attachment to email messages directed to the following email box: [consentagreement@ftc.gov](mailto:consentagreement@ftc.gov).

The FTC Act and other laws the Commission administers permit the collection of public comments to consider and use in this proceeding as appropriate. All timely and responsive public comments, whether filed in paper or electronic form, will be considered by the Commission, and will be available to the public on the FTC Web site, to the extent practicable, at <http://www.ftc.gov>. As a matter of discretion, the FTC makes every effort to remove home contact information for individuals from the public comments it receives before placing those comments on the FTC Web site. More information, including routine uses permitted by the Privacy Act, may be found in the FTC's privacy policy, at <http://www.ftc.gov/ftc/privacy.htm>.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Karan Singh, Bureau of Competition, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20580, (202) 326-2274.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Pursuant to section 6(f) of the Federal Trade Commission Act, 38 Stat. 721, 15 U.S.C. 46(f), and § 2.34 of the Commission Rules of Practice, 16 CFR 2.34, notice is hereby given that the above-captioned consent agreement containing a consent order to cease and desist, having been filed with and accepted, subject to final approval, by the Commission, has been placed on the public record for a period of thirty (30) days. The following Analysis to Aid Public Comment describes the terms of the consent agreement, and the allegations in the complaint. An electronic copy of the full text of the consent agreement package can be obtained from the FTC Home Page (for August 5, 2005), on the World Wide Web, at <http://www.ftc.gov/os/2005/08/index.htm>.<sup>1</sup> A paper copy can be obtained from the FTC Public Reference Room, Room 130-H, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20580, either in person or by calling (202) 326-2222.

Public comments are invited, and may be filed with the Commission in either paper or electronic form. All comments should be filed as prescribed in the **ADDRESSES** section above, and must be received on or before the date specified in the **DATES** section.

### Analysis of Agreement Containing Consent Order to Aid Public Comment

The Federal Trade Commission has accepted, subject to final approval, an agreement containing a proposed consent order with Partners Health Network, Inc. The agreement settles charges that Partners Health violated Section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act, 15 U.S.C. 45, by orchestrating and implementing agreements among members of Partners Health to fix prices and other terms on which they would deal with health plans, and to refuse to deal with such purchasers except on collectively-determined terms. The proposed consent order has been placed on the public record for 30 days to receive comments from interested persons. Comments received during this period will become part of the public record. After 30 days, the Commission will review the agreement and the comments received, and will decide whether it should withdraw from the agreement or make the proposed order final.

The purpose of this analysis is to facilitate public comment on the proposed order. The analysis is not intended to constitute an official interpretation of the agreement and proposed order, or to modify their terms in any way. Further, the proposed consent order has been entered into for settlement purposes only and does not constitute an admission by Partners Health that it violated the law or that the facts alleged in the complaint (other than jurisdictional facts) are true.

### The Complaint

The allegations of the complaint are summarized below.

Partners Health is a physician-hospital organization consisting of approximately 225 physicians, Palmetto Health Baptist Medical Center at Easley, and Cannon Memorial Hospital. Partners Health does business in the Pickens, South Carolina, area, which is located in northwestern South Carolina. Partners Health was "created to develop, negotiate, enter into, and administer contracts" for its physician members, and its "primary function" is described as "centralized managed care contracting."

Partners Health's physician members account for approximately 75% of the physicians independently practicing (that is, those not employed by area hospitals) in and around the Pickens County area. To be marketable in this area, a health plan must have access to a large number of physicians who are members of Partners Health.

Although Partners Health purports to operate as a "messenger model"<sup>2</sup>—that is, an arrangement that does not facilitate horizontal agreements on price—it orchestrated such price agreements. The Partners Health Executive Director negotiates physician contracts with payors using a physician fee schedule that he created with input from the Partners Health physician members. This contracting process is overseen from start to finish by the Advisory Board and the Board of Directors. The Advisory Board is a 12-member committee that provides consultation to both the Board of Directors and the Executive Director during contract negotiations.

The Executive Director creates the Partners Health fee schedule by first polling the Partners Health physician practices to determine what prices they would like to receive in managed care contracts. The Executive Director then takes the highest prices he receives from among the physicians' responses for a given medical procedure, and assembles those highest prices into a single fee schedule. The Executive Director uses this fee schedule to negotiate contract terms with health plans. Whenever a health plan rejects the Partners Health fee schedule, Partners Health's Executive Director negotiates, in consultation with the Advisory Board, a contract with a "comparable" fee schedule. After notifying the Board of Directors, the Executive Director transmits these contract terms to the Partners Health member practices for their review. Physician members are automatically bound by the contract unless they specifically opt out within 30 days of receiving the offer.

When they join Partners Health, the physician members agree to refer the patients they see under Partners Health contracts only to other Partners Health physicians, except in medical emergencies. This requirement stands even if non-Partners Health physicians are in the contracted payor's network.

Partners Health has orchestrated collective agreements on fees and other terms of dealing with health plans, carried out collective negotiations with health plans, fostered refusals to deal, and threatened to refuse to deal with health plans that resisted Partners Health's desired terms. Partners Health

succeeded in forcing numerous health plans to raise the fees paid to Partners Health physician members, and thereby raised the cost of medical care in the Pickens County area. Partners Health engaged in no efficiency-enhancing integration sufficient to justify joint negotiation of fees. By the acts set forth in the Complaint, Partners Health violated Section 5 of the FTC Act.

### The Proposed Consent Order

The proposed order is designed to remedy the illegal conduct charged in the complaint and prevent its recurrence. It is similar to recent consent orders that the Commission has issued to settle charges that physician groups engaged in unlawful agreements to raise fees they receive from health plans.

The proposed order's specific provisions are as follows:

Paragraph II.A prohibits Partners Health from entering into or facilitating any agreement between or among any physicians: (1) To negotiate with payors on any physician's behalf; (2) to deal, not to deal, or threaten not to deal with payors; (3) on what terms to deal with any payor; or (4) not to deal individually with any payor, or to deal with any payor only through an arrangement involving Partners Health.

Other parts of Paragraph II reinforce these general prohibitions. Paragraph II.B prohibits Partners Health from facilitating exchanges of information between physicians concerning whether, or on what terms, to contract with a payor. Paragraph II.C bars attempts to engage in any action prohibited by Paragraph II.A or II.B, and Paragraph II.D proscribes Partners Health from inducing anyone to engage in any action prohibited by Paragraphs II.A through II.C.

As in other Commission orders addressing providers' collective bargaining with health care purchasers, certain kinds of agreements are excluded from the general bar on joint negotiations. Partners Health would not be precluded from engaging in conduct that is reasonably necessary to form or participate in legitimate joint contracting arrangements among competing physicians in a "qualified risk-sharing joint arrangement" or a "qualified clinically-integrated joint arrangement." The arrangement, however, must not facilitate the refusal of, or restrict, physicians in contracting with payors outside of the arrangement.

As defined in the proposed order, a "qualified risk-sharing joint arrangement" possesses two key characteristics. First, all physician participants must share substantial

<sup>2</sup> Some arrangements can facilitate contracting between health care providers and payors without fostering an illegal agreement among competing physicians on fees or fee-related terms. One such approach, sometimes referred to as a "messenger model" arrangement, is described in the 1996 Statements of Antitrust Enforcement Policy in Health Care jointly issued by the Federal Trade Commission and U.S. Department of Justice, at 125. See <http://www.ftc.gov/reports/hlth3s.htm#9>.

financial risk through the arrangement, such that the arrangement creates incentives for the physician participants jointly to control costs and improve quality by managing the provision of services. Second, any agreement concerning reimbursement or other terms or conditions of dealing must be reasonably necessary to obtain significant efficiencies through the joint arrangement.

A "qualified clinically-integrated joint arrangement," on the other hand, need not involve any sharing of financial risk. Instead, as defined in the proposed order, physician participants must participate in active and ongoing programs to evaluate and modify their clinical practice patterns in order to control costs and ensure the quality of services provided, and the arrangement must create a high degree of interdependence and cooperation among physicians. As with qualified risk-sharing arrangements, any agreement concerning price or other terms of dealing must be reasonably necessary to achieve the efficiency goals of the joint arrangement.

Paragraph III, for three years, requires Partners Health to notify the Commission before entering into any arrangement to act as a messenger, or as an agent on behalf of any physicians, with payors regarding contracts. Paragraph III also sets out the information necessary to make the notification complete.

Paragraph IV, for three years, requires Partners Health to notify the Commission before participating in contracting with health plans on behalf of a qualified risk-sharing joint arrangement, or a qualified clinically-integrated joint arrangement. The contracting discussions that trigger the notice provision may be either among physicians, or between Partners Health and health plans. Paragraph IV also sets out the information necessary to satisfy the notification requirement.

Paragraph V requires Partners Health to distribute the complaint and order to all physicians who have participated in Partners Health, and to payors that negotiated contracts with Partners Health or indicated an interest in contracting with Partners Health. Paragraph V.D. requires Partners Health, at any payor's request and without penalty, or, at the latest, within one year after the order is made final, to terminate its current contracts with respect to providing physician services. Paragraph V.D. also allows any contract currently in effect to be extended, upon mutual consent of Partners Health and the contracted payor, to any date no later than one year from when the order

became final. This extension allows both parties to negotiate a termination date that would equitably enable them to prepare for the impending contract termination. Paragraph V.E requires Partners Health to distribute payor requests for contract termination to all physicians who participate in Partners Health.

Paragraphs VI, VII, and VIII of the proposed order impose various obligations on Partners Health to report or provide access to information to the Commission to facilitate monitoring Partners Health's compliance with the order.

The proposed order will expire in 20 years.

By direction of the Commission, with Chairman Majoras recused.

**Donald S. Clark,**  
*Secretary.*

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**BILLING CODE 6750-01-P**

## **GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION**

### **Office of Small Business Utilization; Small Business Advisory Committee**

**AGENCY:** Office of Small Business Utilization, GSA.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The General Services Administration is announcing the creation of a Small Business Advisory Committee (the Committee). The Committee will offer advice and recommendations on a wide range of government procurement issues affecting small business. Specifically, the committee is to develop proposed solutions that will allow GSA to make it easier for small businesses to participate in federal contracting, identify problem areas currently restricting small business participation, and provide direct feedback on the impact of new legislation and regulations on small business as they are introduced by the government.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Denis Peck, Room 6021, GSA Building, 1800 F Street, NW., Washington, DC 20405 (202) 501-1021 or email at [denis.peck@gsa.gov](mailto:denis.peck@gsa.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This notice is published in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-463), and advises of the establishment of the GSA Small Business Advisory Committee. The GSA Administrator has determined that the establishment of the Board is necessary and in the public interest.

The First Meeting of the Small Business Advisory Committee will be held Thursday, September 1, 2005 at the JW Marriott Desert Ridge Resort in Phoenix, Arizona. The meeting will begin at 1:00 pm and conclude no later than 4:30 p.m. Hotel information is available by calling (480) 293-3829. The Committee also will accept oral public comments at this meeting and has reserved a total of thirty minutes for this purpose. Members of the public wishing to reserve speaking time must contact Denis Peck in writing at: [denis.peck@gsa.gov](mailto:denis.peck@gsa.gov) or by fax at (202) 208-5938, no later than one week prior to the meeting.

Dated: August 5, 2005

**Felipe Mendoza**

*Associate Administrator Office of Small Business Utilization General Services Administration.*

[FR Doc. 05-15981 Filed 8-11-05; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 6820-34-S**

## **OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT ETHICS**

### **Proposed Collection; Comment Request for Modified OGE Form 450 Executive Branch Confidential Financial Disclosure Report**

**AGENCY:** Office of Government Ethics (OGE).

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Office of Government Ethics intends to modify the Executive Branch Confidential Financial Disclosure Report form (hereafter, OGE Form 450), to improve its clarity and design and change to some extent the information that it collects. After this first round notice and public comment period, OGE plans to submit a modified OGE Form 450 to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and three-year extension of approval under the Paperwork Reduction Act. The modified OGE Form 450 would be used for confidential financial disclosure reporting under OGE's proposed amended executive branch regulations, once those regulatory revisions are finalized.

**DATES:** Comments by the public and agencies on this proposal are invited and should be received by October 26, 2005.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments to OGE by any of the following methods:

- E-Mail: [usoge@oge.gov](mailto:usoge@oge.gov). For E-mail messages, the subject line should include the following reference: "OGE Form 450 Executive Branch Confidential Financial Disclosure Report Paperwork Comment."