

US regulator, Amgen reach deal to unblock biopharma acquisition

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The US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) announced an agreement on Friday allowing American drug manufacturer Amgen to proceed with its \$28 billion takeover of Horizon Therapeutics.

The agreement addresses "potential competitive harm" posed by the takeover and will be subject to a 30-day comment period, the FTC said in a press release.

Under the deal, "Amgen will be prohibited from leveraging its drug portfolio to disadvantage rivals and will be required to seek prior approval before acquiring related products," the FTC said.

The US regulator had filed suit in May to block the purchase, arguing it would entrench the monopoly positions of Horizon's drugs to treat thyroid eye disease and chronic refractory gout respectively.

The agreement settles the FTC suit as well as one filed by six US states, the statement said.

Some of the requirements under the consent order will be valid until 2032, while others must be maintained for fifteen years after the agreement is finalized, said the FTC.

A monitor will be appointed to provide regular updates on Amgen's compliance to the FTC and the states.

Founded in 2005, Dublin-based Horizon develops and markets drugs to treat rare, autoimmune and inflammatory diseases.

Its flagship product is Tepezza, a treatment for thyroid eye disease sold in the US since 2020. It generated \$1.7 billion in 2021, more than half of Horizon's sales.

Another major Horizon drug is Krystexxa, used in the treatment of chronic gout. The agreement with the FTC includes specific conditions for Tepezza and Krystexxa.

In a statement, Horizon and Amgen said they "anticipate being able to close the acquisition in early fourth-quarter 2023 and look forward to the opportunity to serve patients around the world suffering from rare diseases."

Shares of both companies jumped as US markets opened on Friday.

Near 2:30 pm (1830 GMT), Amgen shares were up .27 percent at \$257.02, while Horizon shares were up 2.27 percent to \$115.30.

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