

Internists have 'significant concerns' about pending insurance company mergers

December 3 2015

The American College of Physicians (ACP) today told the U.S. Department of Justice Antitrust Division that it has "significant concerns about the pending mergers between Aetna/Humana and Anthem/Cigna and the potential negative effects they could have on competition in the health insurance market." Wayne J. Riley, MD, MPH, MBA, MACP, president of ACP said in a letter that "The claim that savings from a merger would be passed on to consumers or result in innovation or higher quality of care must be thoroughly scrutinized."

Dr. Riley cautioned that "consolidating four of the largest [health insurance](#) companies into two entities seriously threatens to undermine the spirit of competition in the health insurance market and could likely have [adverse effects](#) on physicians and patients."

In November, ACP's Board of Regents adopted policy that expresses strong concern about the impact of anti-competitive insurance company mergers. Today's letter to the Department of Justice is part of the College's continuing efforts to urge regulators to block mergers that can adversely affect access, patient choice of physicians and hospitals, and the cost of care. In his conclusion to the letter, Dr. Riley noted that:

"It is imperative that the Department of Justice Antitrust Division consider both the local and collective impact these [mergers](#) could have, and block any deal that significantly increases health insurer concentration resulting in decreased choice and increased cost for patients and employers, reduces access due to changing and narrowing

networks of physicians and hospitals, or prevents [physicians](#) from negotiation over provision of health services with those insurers."

More information: www.acponline.org/acp_policy/letter_doj_baer_2015.pdf

Provided by American College of Physicians

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