

CHARTIS TOP READS

New FTC Healthcare Task Force signals increased scrutiny of transactions and market practices amid growing deal volume

Weeks of April 5 - April 18, 2026

| **APR 17, 2026**

<https://www.chartis.com/insights/new-ftc-healthcare-task-force-signals-increased-scrutiny-transactions-and-market-practices>

What's trending:

The Federal Trade Commission's (FTC's) launch of a Healthcare Task Force focused on "consumer protection and competition" is the latest indicator of a more active and coordinated federal regulatory environment. Simultaneously, state oversight continues to expand through healthcare cost commissions and similar bodies, creating a landscape where healthcare transactions and market practices are increasingly subject to multi-level review.

Key aspects of the federal Healthcare Taskforce include:

- **More coordinated federal enforcement:** The FTC is aligning investigation efforts across the Bureaus of Competition, Consumer Protection, and Economics, and increasing coordination with other agencies, including the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
- **Expanded scope beyond traditional merger review:** The task force will examine a wider range of conduct, including pricing and transparency, marketing practices, contracting arrangements, and data use and privacy.

State-level regulatory bodies are also increasing oversight:

- **Expansion of healthcare cost commissions and similar entities:** More than a dozen states now operate healthcare cost commissions or cost growth target programs focused on controlling spending and increasing transparency.

- **Broader scope and authority:** These state bodies are focusing on a broad range of healthcare activities using a variety of methods, including data collection on utilization and spending, transaction review and approval, and competition-related policy and legislative actions.

Healthcare merger and acquisition (M&A) activity is increasing despite scrutiny:

- **Q1 2026 has seen an uptick in healthcare sector transactions:** Healthcare organizations and investors are increasingly focused on ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs), home health, post-acute care, and behavioral health services.
- **Transactions are moving forward within a more complex regulatory environment:** This uptick follows a slowdown in late 2025 tied to broader market uncertainty, including the impact of tariffs and the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA).

Why it matters:

Combined federal and state activity is creating a broader enforcement lens focused on how health systems grow, contract, and compete. Review is no longer limited to mergers. It now includes a wider set of activities, such as pricing practices, contracting arrangements, sources of capital, and physician employment structures.

Regulators are shifting toward a more comprehensive evaluation of both the structure and impact of healthcare transactions. In addition to traditional measures of market concentration, regulators are examining how healthcare deals may affect pricing dynamics, contracting leverage, quality measures, and patient access.

In some states, policymakers are taking more direct approaches to cost control. These include public scrutiny of pricing levels, exploration of rate-setting mechanisms, and increased focus on private equity investment. At the federal level, a recently introduced Senate bill targets vertical integration, including health system and corporate ownership of physician practices.

Within this environment, healthcare organizations are reassessing how transactions can help support strategic goals and financial sustainability. While health systems continue to pursue growth strategies, they are applying greater rigor to evaluating strategic fit, financial performance, and expected impact.

At the same time, many are reevaluating existing partnerships and affiliations to ensure they are delivering anticipated value and remain aligned with current priorities. Overall, this environment is driving more deliberate and disciplined decision-making.

Key considerations for health system leaders:

- Assess how acquisitions, partnerships, and divestments can advance strategic priorities within an increasingly challenging operating environment
- Account for a broader scope of regulatory review across transactions and market practices

- Clearly articulate patient, community, access, and affordability benefits early in the transaction process
- Incorporate quality and outcomes metrics into the strategic rationale for growth
- Plan for integration earlier to accelerate value realization and demonstrate impact
- Prepare for multi-agency and multi-state review processes, including increased legal and compliance involvement

Health systems that align strategy, execution, and regulatory readiness will be better positioned to advance growth initiatives that both support sustainability and deliver measurable value to patients and communities.

Related links:

Becker's Hospital Review:

Fierce Healthcare:

Bipartisan Policy Center:

Chartis Top Reads

[View All](#)

Our services

[STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION](#)

[PERFORMANCE TRANSFORMATION](#)

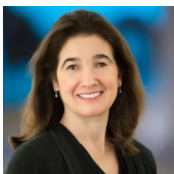
[DIGITAL & TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMATION](#)

[CHARTIS CENTERS FOR AI & STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE](#)

[PAYER TRANSFORMATION](#)

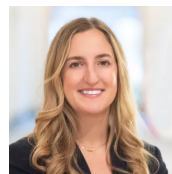
[STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS & CHANGE MANAGEMENT](#)

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Cynthia Bailey

Associate Vice President of Strategy



Amy Woodrum

Senior Partner