

# Humana, Aetna merger will get Florida review

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The Florida Attorney General's Office will review the proposed merger of health care giants Aetna and Humana, two of the top four players in the state.

"As with any merger that has the potential to affect competition within our state, we will be reviewing the proposed merger," said Attorney General spokesman Whitney Ray. "A typical merger review looks at the potential competitive effects within the state."

If you've been paying attention, you know there have been rumblings about this combination for a while. Before the merger was announced, The Palm Beach Post wrote about [more than \\$400 million in dividend payments](#) from Humana and Aetna's Florida companies to their parent organizations that drew objections from state regulators. What's good for shareholders is not always necessarily good for consumers.

The prospective marriage will get a federal antitrust review as well, with nothing expected to be finalized until well into 2016, if then.

Will it cause premiums to rise or fall? In theory, such consolidations can streamline costs and beef up bargaining power with providers. But in the end, it also produces fewer big insurers competing with each other.

Humana and Aetna rank in the state's top four health insurers by premiums collected, so this is a big combination.

**Company group/ Premiums**

1. UnitedHealth Grp \$8.9 billion
2. BCBS Of Florida Grp \$8.8 billion
3. Humana Grp \$7.9 billion
4. Aetna Grp \$3.5 billion

Source: Florida Office of Insurance Regulation, National Association of Insurance Commissioners, based on 2013 premiums.