

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BEFORE THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION**

COMMISSIONERS: **Jon Leibowitz, Chairman
Pamela Jones Harbour
William E. Kovacic
J. Thomas Rosch**

)	
In the Matter of)	
)	DOCKET NO. C-4260
ALTA BATES MEDICAL GROUP, INC.,)	
a California corporation.)	
)	

DECISION AND ORDER

The Federal Trade Commission (“Commission”), having initiated an investigation of certain acts and practices of Alta Bates Medical Group, Inc., herein sometimes referred to as “Respondent,” and Respondent having been furnished thereafter with a copy of the draft Complaint that counsel for the Commission proposed to present to the Commission for its consideration and which, if issued, would charge Respondent with violations of Section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act (“Act”), as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 45; and

Respondent, its attorney, and counsel for the Commission having thereafter executed an Agreement Containing Consent Order to Cease and Desist (“Consent Agreement”), containing an admission by Respondent of all the jurisdictional facts set forth in the aforesaid draft Complaint, a statement that the signing of said Consent Agreement is for settlement purposes only and does not constitute an admission by Respondent that the law ha

1. Respondent Alta Bates Medical Group, Inc. is a for-profit corporation, organized, existing, and doing business under and by virtue of the laws of the State of California, with its principal place of business located at 2000 Powell Street, Suite 830, Emeryville, CA 94608.
2. The Federal Trade Commission has jurisdiction of the subject matter of this proceeding and of Respondent, and this proceeding is in the public interest.

ORDER

I.

IT IS ORDERED that, as used in this Order, the following definitions shall apply:

- A. “Respondent” means Alta Bates Medical Group, Inc., its officers, directors, employees, agents, attorneys, representatives, successors, and assigns; and the subsidiaries, divisions, groups, and affiliates controlled by it, and the respective officers, directors, employees, agents, attorneys, representatives, successors, and assigns of each.
- B. “Medical Group Practice” means a bona fide, integrated firm in which physicians practice medicine together as partners, shareholders, owners, members, or employees, or in which only one Physician practices medicine.
- C. “Participate” in an entity means (1) to be a partner, shareholder, owner, member, or employee of such entity, or (2) to provide services, agree to provide services, or offer to provide services, to a Payor through such entity. This definition also applies to all tenses and forms of the word “participate,” including, but not limited to, “participating,” “participated,” and “participation.”
- D. “Payor” means any Person that pays, or arranges for the payment, for all or any part of any Physician services for itself or for any other Person, as well as any Person that develops, leases, or sells access to networks of Physicians.
- E. “Person” means both natural Persons and artificial Persons, including, but not limited to, corporations, unincorporated entities, and governments.
- F. “Physician” means a doctor of allopathic medicine (“M.D.”) or a doctor of osteopathic medicine (“D.O.”).
- G. “Preexisting Contract” means a contract for the provision of Physician services that was in effect on the date of the receipt by a Payor that is a party to such contract of notice sent by Respondent Alta Bates Medical Group, Inc., pursuant to Paragraph VII.A.2 of this Order of such Payor’s right to terminate such contract.

- H. "Principal Address" means either (1) the primary business address, if there is a business address, or (2) the primary residential address, if there is no business address.
- I. "Qualified Clinically-Integrated Joint Arrangement" means an arrangement to provide Physician services in which:
1. all Physicians who Participate in the arrangement Participate in active and ongoing programs of the arrangement to evaluate and modify the practice patterns of, and create a high degree of interdependence and cooperation among, the Physicians who Participate in the arrangement, in order to control costs and ensure the quality of services provided through the arrangement; and
 2. any agreement concerning price or other terms or conditions of dealing entered into by or within the arrangement is reasonably necessary to obtain significant efficiencies that result from such integration through the arrangement.
- J. "Qualified Risk-Sharing Joint Arrangement" means an arrangement to provide Physician services in which:

K. “Qualified Arrangement” means a Qualified Clinically-Integrated Joint Arrangement or a Qualified Risk-Sharing Joint Arrangement.

II.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent, directly or indirectly, or through any corporate or other device, in connection with the provision of Physician services in or affecting commerce, as “commerce” is defined in Section 4 of the Federal Trade Commission Act, 15 U.S.C. § 44, cease and desist from:

- A. Entering into, adhering to, Participating in, maintaining, organizing, implementing, enforcing, or otherwise facilitating any combination, conspiracy, agreement, or understanding between or among any Physicians with respect to their provision of Physician services:
 - 1. To negotiate on behalf of any Physician with any Payor;
 - 2. To refuse to deal, or threaten to refuse to deal, with any Payor, in furtherance of any conduct or agreement that is prohibited by any other provision of Paragraph II of this Order;
 - 3. Regarding any term, condition, or requirement upon which any Physician deals, or is willing to deal, with any Payor, including, but not limited to, price terms; or
 - 4. Not to deal individually with any Payor, or not to deal with any Payor other than through Respondent;

B. Ex

III.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, for three (3) years from the date this Order becomes final, for any arrangement under which Respondent would act as an agent, or as a messenger, on behalf of any Physician or any Medical Group Practice with any Payor regarding contracts, except for those contracts under which Respondent is, or will be, paid on a capitated (per member per month) rate by the Payor, Respondent shall notify the Commission in writing (“Paragraph III Notification”) at least sixty (60) days prior to entering into the arrangement for which Paragraph III Notification is required. The Paragraph III Notification shall include the number of proposed Physician Participants in the proposed arrangement; the proposed geographic area in which the proposed arrangement would operate; a copy of any proposed Physician Participation agreement; a description of the proposed arrangement’s purpose and function; a description of any resulting efficiencies expected to be obtained through the proposed arrangement; and a description of procedures to be implemented to limit possible anticompetitive effects of the proposed arrangement, such as those prohibited by this Order.

IV.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that:

- A. If, within sixty (60) days from the date of the Commission’s receipt of the Paragraph III Notification, a representative of the Commission makes a written request to the Respondent providing such notification for additional information, then that Respondent shall not participate in the proposed arrangement prior to the expiration of thirty (30) days after substantially complying with such request, or such shorter waiting period as may be granted in writing from the Bureau of Competition;
- B. The expiration of any waiting period described herein without a request for additional information, or without the initiation of an enforcement proceeding, shall not be construed as a determination by the Commission, or its staff, that the proposed arrangement does or does not violate this Order or any law enforced by the Commission;
- C. The absence of notice that the proposed arrangement has been rejected, regardless of a request for additional information, shall not be construed as a determination by the Commission, or its staff, that the proposed arrangement has been approved;
- D. Receipt by the Commission of any Paragraph III Notification is not to be construed as a determination by the Commission, or its staff, that the proposed arrangement does or does not violate this Order or any law enforced by the Commission; and
- E. Paragraph III Notification shall not be required prior to participating in any arrangement for which Paragraph III Notification has previously been given.

V.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that for three (3) years from the date this Order becomes final, pursuant to each Qualified Arrangement in which Respondent is a Participant, except for those contracts under which Respondent is, or will be, paid on a capitated (per member per month) rate by the Payor, (“Paragraph V Arrangement”), Respondent shall notify the Commission in writing (“Paragraph V Notification”) at least sixty (y

- B. If, within sixty (60) days from the Commission's receipt of the Paragraph V Notification, a representative of the Commission makes a written request to Respondent for additional information, then Respondent shall not participate in any arrangement described in Paragraph V.A or Paragraph V.B of this Order prior to the expiration of thirty (30) days after substantially complying with such request for additional information, or such shorter waiting period as may be granted in writing from the Bureau of Competition;
- C. The expiration of any waiting period described herein without a request for additional information, or without the initiation of an enforcement proceeding, shall not be construed as a determination by the Commission, or its staff, that the proposed Qualified Arrangement does or does not violate this Order or any law enforced by the Commission;
- D. The absence of notice that the proposed Qualified Arrangement has been rejected, regardless of a request for additional information, shall not be construed as a determination by the Commission, or its staff, that the proposed Qualified Arrangement has been approved;
- E. Receipt by the Commission of any Paragraph V Notification regarding participation pursuant to a proposed Qualified Arrangement is not to be construed as a de

under which Respondent is, or will be, paid a capitated (per member per month) rate by the Payor;

- B. Terminate, without penalty or charge, and in compliance with any applicable laws, any Preexisting Contract with any Payor who is sent the letter required by Paragraph VII.A.2 of this Order, at the earlier of: (1) receipt by Respondent Alta Bates Medical Group, Inc. of a written request to terminate such contract from any Payor that is a party to the contract, or (2) the earliest termination date, renewal date (including any automatic renewal date), or the anniversary date of such contract.

PROVIDED, HOWEVER, a Preexisting Contract for Physician services may extend beyond any such termination or renewal date no later than one (1) year from the date that the Order becomes final if, prior to such termination or renewal date:

- (a) the Payor submits to Respondent Alta Bates Medical Group, Inc. a written request to

this Order and the Complaint from Respondent, within thirty (30) days of the time that such Payor enters into such contract; and

- c. Each Person who becomes an officer, director, manager, or employee of Respondent, and who did not previously receive a copy of this Order and the Complaint from Respondent, within thirty (30) days of the time that he or she assumes such position with Respondent; and
 4. Annually publish in an official annual report or newsletter and/or on the physician-access portion of Respondent's website, a copy of this Order and the Complaint with such prominence as is given to regularly featured articles, and send the report or newsletter to, or notify by electronic mail that such report or newsletter is published on the website, all Physicians who participate in Respondent.
- E. File verified written reports within sixty (60) days from the date this Order becomes final, annually thereafter for three (3) years on the anniversary of the date this Order becomes final, and at such other times as the Commission may by written notice require. Each report shall include:
1. a detailed description of the manner and form in which the Respondent has complied and is complying with this Order;
 2. the name, address, and telephone number of each Payor with which the Respondent has had any contact, during

- B. at least thirty (30) days prior to any proposed: (1) dissolution of Respondent; (2) acquisition, merger, or consolidation of Respondent; or (3) any other change in Respondent including, but not limited to, assignment and the creation or dissolution of subsidiaries, if such change might affect compliance obligations arising out of this Order.

IX.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, for the purpose of determining or securing compliance with this Order, and subject to any legally recognized privilege, and upon written request and upon five (5) days notice to Respondent, Respondent shall, without restraint or interference, permit any duly authorized representative of the Commission:

- A. Access, during office hours of Respondent, and in the presence of counsel, to all facilities and access to inspect and copy all books, ledgers, accounts, correspondence, memoranda, and all other records and documents in the possession, or under the control, of Respondent relating to compliance with this Order, which copying services shall be provided by Respondent at its expense; and
- B. To interview officers, directors, or employees of Respondent, who may have counsel present, regarding such matters.

X.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this Order shall terminate on July 10, 2029.

By the Commission.

Donald S. Clark
Secretary

SEAL
ISSUED: July 10, 2009

Appendix A

[Respondent's letterhead]

[name of payor's CEO]
[address]

Dear _____:

Enclosed is a copy of a complaint and a consent order ("Order") issued by the Federal Trade Commission against Alta Bates Medical Group, Inc.

Pursuant to Paragraph V.B of the Order, Alta Bates Medical Group, Inc. must allow you to terminate, upon your written request without any penalty or charge, any contracts with Alta Bates Medical Group, Inc. for the provision of physician services that were in effect prior to your receipt of this letter.

Paragraph V.B of the Order also provides that, if you do not terminate your contract, the contract will terminate at the earlier of [date one year from the date the Order becomes final] or its earliest termination or renewal date (including any automatic renewal date). If the termination or renewal date occurs prior to [date one year from the date the Order becomes final], you may request Alta Bates Medical Group, Inc. to extend that date to a date no later than [date one year from the date the Order becomes final]. If you choose to extend the term of the contract, you may nevertheless still terminate the contract at any time.

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