



Antitrust

“Competition is the most important principle of a free market system. In a competitive market, businesses need to compete with each other to attract customers...Laws throughout the United States that protect competition are called antitrust laws. Their goal is to guarantee a fair fight among businesses in order to protect consumers in the market”.

https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/CPD%20Documents/Tips-Publications/Antitrust_Handbook.pdf

- ▶ The Attorney General’s Antitrust Division enforces the Maryland Antitrust Act (MATA) and brings enforcement actions related to anticompetitive conduct. For example:
 - ▶ Unlawful wage fixing – e.g., competing employers agree on what they will pay LPNs/RNs.
 - ▶ Unlawful monopoly behavior – e.g., a specialty physician group buys up smaller groups across a region and then raises prices.
 - ▶ Unlawful market allocation – e.g., a dental group pays another to refrain from providing services in a particular market.
 - ▶ Unlawful merger – e.g. two nursing homes merge in a region and this substantially lessens competition in that area.
 - ▶ Depending on the violation, the Antitrust Division may seek civil penalties of up to \$10,000 for each day a violation persists, among other remedies.
- ▶ Questions about enforcement of the MATA should be directed to: **antitrust@oag.state.md.us**