

*Health, life sciences,
and the environment
division*



The Health, Life Sciences, and the Environment Division comprises four Programs: the Biological and Behavioral Sciences Program, the Food and Renewable Resources Program, the Health Program, and the Oceans and Environment/ Program.

The Biological and Behavioral Sciences Program assesses state-of-the-art technologies arising from progress in a wide range of scientific and technical disciplines. Typical studies explore actual and potential applications of results and techniques from biological and behavioral sciences, usually with an emphasis on ethical, legal, economic, and regulatory issues. Currently, the Program's activities center on (1) biotechnology and applications and implications of human molecular genetics, (2) neurological and behavioral sciences, and (3) Federal regulatory programs that involve use and understanding of biological tests and knowledge.

The scope of the Food and Renewable Resources Program

includes all agriculture-related technologies used to provide society with food, fiber, and chemicals, and technologies that enhance or Jeopardize the ability to sustain in perpetuity the renewable resource bases that make such production possible. Agriculture itself is defined in the broad sense, including all crop and livestock production and forestry. Attention also is given to the impact that technology has had and is likely to have on how the agricultural system is organized, who controls it, and where it is heading. Further, the Program covers renewable resources that presently may not be considered or produced as crops, but that support agricultural production and are fundamental to human needs generally. Relevant international analyses on renewable resources and agriculture are included in certain Program studies.

The Health Program's charter is reflected in two primary types of efforts:

- 1) assessments of specific clinical and general health care technologies, and
- 2) studies of broader issues of health policy related to or with implications for technology.

In addition, it has certain statutory, methodology oversight responsibilities regarding Vietnam veterans health studies, and provides the staff work for the OTA Director's mandated responsibility to select and appoint members of the Prospective Payment Assessment Commission, the Physician Payment Review Commission, and the Advisory Panel on Alzheimer's Disease.

The Oceans and Environment Program has responsibility for all ocean-related questions, including ocean resources and maritime policy, and for large-scale environmental issues, such as climate modification and air, water, and land pollution. As a result of changing congressional interest, the Program has developed capability for analyzing the difficult questions in which the overriding concern lies with the environmental effects of decisions. The work of the Program usually falls under several categories: Federal services related to oceans and the environment, natural resources, pollution control, marine industry, and climate change.

In FY 1993, the Health, Life Sciences, and the Environment Division published 10 assessment reports and 13 background papers.

Genetic Tests and Health Insurance: Results of a Survey, October 1992
Requested by:
House Committee on
Science, Space and Technology
House Committee on
Energy and Commerce

Genetic Counseling and Cystic Fibrosis Carrier Screening: Results of a Survey, October 1992
Requested by:
House Committee on
Science, Space and Technology
House Committee on
Energy and Commerce

Federal and Private Roles in the Development and Revision of Alglucerase Therapy for Gaucher Disease, October 1992
Requested by:
House Committee on
Energy and Commerce

Science and Technology Issues in Coastal Ecotourism, October 1992
Requested by:
House Committee on
Merchant Marine and Fisheries

Coverage of Preventive Services: Provision of Selected Current Health Care Reform Proposals, October 1992
Requested by:
Senate Committee on
Labor and Human Resources

Hazards Ahead: Managing Cleanup Worker Health and Safety at the Nuclear Weapons Complex, February 1993
Requested by:
Senate Committee on Armed Services

Pharmaceutical R&D: Casts, Risks, and Rewards, February 1993
Requested by:
House Committee on
Energy and Commerce

Drug Labeling in Developing Countries, May 1993
Requested by:
Senate Committee on
Labor and Human Resources
House Committee on
Energy and Commerce

An Inconsistent Picture:
A Compilation of Analyses of Economic Impacts of Competing Approaches to Health Care Reform by Experts and Stakeholders, June 1993
Requested by:
Senate Committee on
Labor and Human Resources

Health Insurance:
The Hawaiian Experience, June 1993
Requested by:
Senate Committee on
Labor and Human Resources

Compilation of Abbreviations and Terms, September 1993

Water for Walker Lake, September 1993
Requested by:
Senator Harry Reid

Alternative Coca Reduction Strategies in the Andean Region, September 1993
Requested by:
Senate Committee on
Labor and Human Resources
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control

Dismantling the Bomb and Managing the Nuclear Materials, September 1993
Requested by:
Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs

OTA Assessment: The Department of Veterans Affairs Persian Gulf Veterans' Health Registry, September 1993
Requested by:
Mandated under Public Law 102-585

Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services
Senate Committee on Finance
House Committee on Energy and Commerce

The Continuing Challenge of Tuberculosis, September 1993
Requested by:
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
House Committee on Government Operations

Biomedical Ethics in U.S. Public Policy, September 1993
Requested by:
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources
Senate Committee on the Judiciary

Harmful Non-Indigenous Species in the United States, September 1993
Requested by:
House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Endorsed by,
Hon. Amo Houghton, TAB member

The Biological Components of Substance Abuse and Addiction, September 1993
Requested by:
House Committee on Government Operations
Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs
Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources

Benefit Design in Health Care Reform: Clinical Preventive Services, September 1993
Requested by:
Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources

Benefit Design in Health Care Reform: Patient Cost-Sharing, September 1993
Requested by:
Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources

Hip Fracture Outcomes in People Age 50 and Over: Mortality, Service Use, Expenditures, and Long-Term Functional Impairment, September 1993
Requested by:
Senate Special Committee on Aging

Impact of Legal Reforms on Medical Malpractice Costs, September 1993
Requested by:
House Committee on Ways and Means
Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources
House Committee on Appropriations,