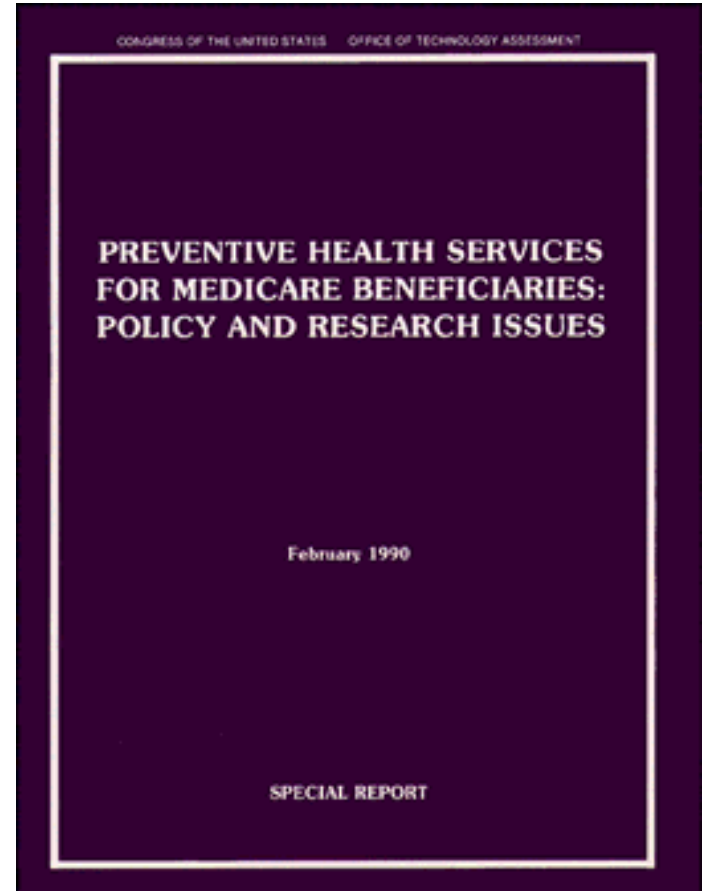


*Preventive Health Services for Medicare
Beneficiaries: Policy and Research Issues*

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Foreword

Interest in health promotion and disease prevention strategies for elderly people has grown in the past ten years, in part because of the need to find ways to moderate the rising costs of health care in this rapidly growing segment of the population. Reflecting this interest, the House Committee on Ways and Means requested that OTA analyze the effectiveness and costs of providing selected preventive health services to the elderly under the Medicare program. The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee had earlier requested that OTA provide information on the value of preventive services for the American people. OTA responded with a study of the effectiveness and costs of four specific preventive services for the elderly: glaucoma screening; cholesterol screening; cervical cancer screening; and colorectal cancer screening. Background papers on each of these services are now or will soon be available. As another part of the assessment, OTA prepared a staff paper on the factors affecting older people's use of preventive services, with particular emphasis on how insurance coverage could be expected to alter such patterns of use.

This Special Report analyzes policy and research issues raised in considering Medicare coverage of preventive services. OTA examines how decisions are currently made about coverage of specific preventive services under Medicare and lays out options for altering the process and criteria governing those decisions. The Special Report also reviews and critiques ongoing demonstration projects and summarizes the results of OTA studies of the costs and effectiveness of specific preventive services for the elderly.

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NOTE: Advisory Panel members provide valuable guidance during the preparation of OTA reports. However, the presence of an individual on the Advisory Panel does not mean that individual agrees with or endorses the conclusions of this particular report

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