

External Review of the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's HIV Prevention Programs: Summary and Overview

INTRODUCTION

In August 1994 the Subcommittee on Health and the Environment of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce requested that the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) update its 1988 background paper, *How Effective Is AIDS Education?* As a prelude to this assessment the Subcommittee also requested that OTA provide a summary and overview of the recent review of HIV prevention programs by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on the Prevention of HIV Infection (see Appendix B for the letter of request).

The Advisory Committee's review was conducted from April through October 1993 and the results published in June 1994 (1). In the interim between completion of the Advisory Committee's review and publication of its findings and recommendations, the CDC began to implement related internal and external actions (described later in this summary and overview); and in meetings with the Advisory Committee scheduled for October 11-12, 1994, CDC will be presenting its full response to the Advisory Committee's findings and recommendations (2).

Two other related and significant reviews of federal HIV prevention programs are also currently being conducted. First in early 1994, at the request of the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the Assistant Secretary for Health convened a DHHS HIV/AIDS Coordinating Committee "to assure that all aspects of the Department's HIV-related activities address the multiple challenges posed by the HIV epidemic in prevention, research, drug development and approval, health care services, and financing in a coordinated manner" (3). An HIV Prevention Work Group was created in June 1994, with the mission of helping the Department establish priorities for investment in HIV/AIDS prevention for FY 1996, and to work on an agenda for development of a more comprehensive plan for HIV/AIDS prevention activities across DHHS's agencies. The report and suggestions for an ongoing process for developing a comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention plan were to be presented to the Assistant Secretary for Health and the Secretary of DHHS in September 1994 (3).

Second, in February 1994, the Center for AIDS Prevention Studies of the University of California, San Francisco, and the Harvard AIDS Institute began a two-year collaborative effort to rethink HIV prevention activities "because of the growing realization that prevention efforts need to be sustained for the long haul, the change in administrations in Washington that permits important shifts in direction, and the recognition that budget constraints compel the most effective use of resources for prevention activities" (4). This project is funded by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, whose Executive Vice-President assumed the Chair of the CDC Advisory Committee on the Prevention of HIV Infection after subcommittees of the Advisory Committee completed their work and prior to the synthesis of the subcommittees' findings and recommendations into the June 1994 report by the Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee was established and chartered by the Secretary of DHHS in accordance with P.L. 92-463 of the Public Health Service Act. According to CDC (1), its strategic