

*Update of Federal Activities Regarding the
Use of Pneumococcal Vaccine*

May 1984

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**UPDATE OF FEDERAL
ACTIVITIES REGARDING
THE USE OF
PNEUMOCOCCAL
VACCINE**

A TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

MAY 1984

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Preface

The legislation that established Medicare in 1965 excluded from coverage immunizations and certain other technologies used for prevention. In 1981, Congress began coverage of pneumococcal vaccination, but has not extended the same coverage to other preventive vaccines, such as influenza.

In its deliberations regarding pneumococcal vaccine, Congress referred to a 1979 report by the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) entitled *A Review of Selected Federal Vaccine and Immunization Policies*. This report used the case of pneumococcal vaccine to illustrate policy issues and included a cost-effectiveness analysis. In December 1983, the Subcommittee on Health and Long-Term Care of the House Select Committee on Aging requested OTA to provide current information on the efficacy and safety of pneumococcal vaccine and on Federal involvement in the vaccine's use.

This technical memorandum presents that updated information. The memorandum describes Federal activities that have taken place since 1979; reevaluates the 1979 cost-effectiveness analysis of vaccination against pneumococcal pneumonia, including new information on vaccine efficacy; and discusses policy implications. Although exact data are not available, it is estimated that about 25 percent of people older than age 65 may have received pneumococcal vaccine. The report concludes that, if the Government wishes to promote the use of pneumococcal vaccine, efforts beyond Medicare coverage will be needed to reach elderly adults.

This memorandum benefited from the consultation and review of a large number of persons in the Federal Government, universities, private industry, and medical community (see app. A). Richard K. Riegelman of George Washington University was particularly helpful in evaluating the medical literature. Key OTA staff involved in the preparation of the document were Jane E. Sisk, Elliott Pickar, and Katherine E. Locke.



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