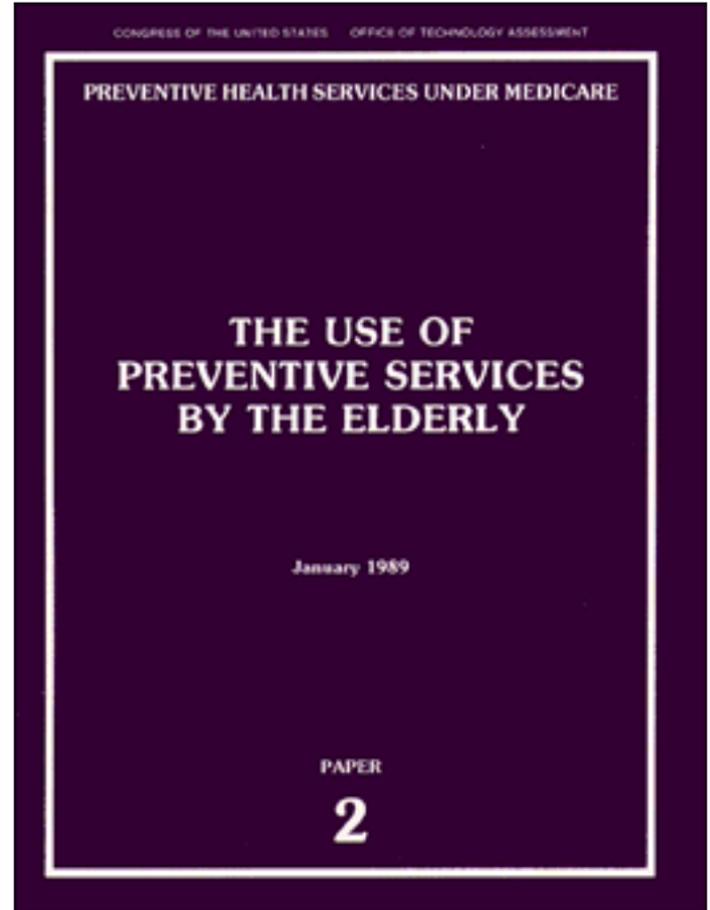


The Use of Preventive Services by the Elderly

January 1989

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FOREWORD

Interest in health promotion and disease prevention strategies for the elderly has grown in the last ten years, partly as a result of advancing knowledge in these areas and partly due to the search for ways to moderate the rising cost of health care in this 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 has also requested that OTA provide information on the value of preventive services for the American people.

This Staff Paper, *The Use of Preventive Services by the Elderly*, is the second in a series of papers being prepared in response to these requests. Understanding the use of preventive services by the elderly is an important component of assessing their effectiveness as Medicare benefits. In this paper we review both new and previously published data on the proportions of elderly currently receiving a variety of preventive health services; we examine factors associated with whether the elderly receive these services; and we analyze the likely implications for Medicare if preventive health services were offered as covered benefits.

The first paper in this series on "Preventive Health Services Under Medicare" examined glaucoma screening as a potential Medicare benefit. Subsequent papers will assess screening for cholesterol, cervical cancer, and colorectal cancer, and will analyze broad issues related to Medicare financing of preventive services for the elderly.


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The Use of Preventive Services by the Elderly

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Carol Guntow prepared this Staff Paper for publication.

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