

*An Inconsistent Picture: A Compilation of
Analyses of Economic Impacts of
Competing Approaches to Health Care
Reform by Experts and Stakeholders*

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Foreword

Health care reform has become the focus of intense debate in government and in the private sector. But reform of the health care system, which represents about one-seventh of the Nation's economy, will pose daunting economic, as well as social and political, issues.

In their efforts to address these issues, health care policy experts and stakeholders have developed several general approaches to reform and sundry variants on those approaches. Numerous analyses of these approaches and proposals have yielded a multitude of quantitative estimates intended to measure their potential economic impact. Yet this abundance of information is not without its pitfalls—in terms of clarity and consistency—for policymakers attempting to weigh various routes to reform.

This Report reviews numerous analyses of the economic impacts of the major approaches to health care reform addressed in this Report—Single Payer, Play-or-Pay, Individual Vouchers or Tax Credits, and Managed Competition—and identifies some of the key issues and significant assumptions behind the estimates provided in these analyses. Through this review, OTA endeavors to facilitate policymakers' understanding of how various provisions tend to influence the economic impact of the approaches and proposals, thereby assisting them in their efforts to sort through the profusion of information provided as well as specify additional details they may require.

The request for this Report came from Senator Ted Stevens, a member of the OTA Technology Assessment Board at the time of his request.

OTA was assisted in this review by the advisory panel for the OTA assessment *Technology, Insurance, and the Health Care System*, and by numerous other health policy experts. OTA gratefully acknowledges the contribution of each of these individuals. As with all OTA reports, the final responsibility for the content of the Report rests with OTA.



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NOTE: OTA appreciates and is grateful for the valuable assistance and thoughtful critiques provided by the advisory panel members. The panel does not, however, necessarily approve, disapprove, or endorse this report. **OTA assumes full responsibility for the report and the accuracy of its contents.**

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