

*Review of the Public Health Service's
Response to AIDS*

February 1985

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**REVIEW OF THE
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE'S
RESPONSE TO AIDS**

A TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

FEBRUARY 1985

This is an OTA Technical Memorandum that has been neither reviewed nor approved by the Technology Assessment Board.



COMMISSION OF THE UNITED STATES
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Foreword

This memorandum was prepared in response to a request by the Subcommittee on Health and the Environment, House Committee on Energy and Commerce, and the Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations and Human Resources, House Committee on Government Operations. The Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) had been conducting an assessment of *Blood Policy and Technology* (published in January 1985) for the House Committee on Energy and Commerce when transfusion-related cases of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) began to appear. We were subsequently asked to review the recent and proposed activities of the Public Health Service (PHS) in response to AIDS, and to evaluate the planning, resources and staffing of PHS's efforts to control AIDS.

OTA was asked to examine both technical aspects of research and related issues of public health policy, in particular:

- the adequacy of PHS's confirmation of the causal relationship between the newly discovered retrovirus HTLV-III and AIDS and the adequacy of research to identify other possible agents involved;
- the adequacy and timeliness of PHS's redirection of general AIDS research toward HTLV-III work, including research on blood, on treatment protocols, on animal models, and on epidemiological work;
- the adequacy and scope of efforts to develop vaccines against the disease;
- the adequacy and timeliness of the distribution of new knowledge and information among researchers and regulators; and
- the adequacy of PHS resources to support needed activities that would yield the best chances for immediate results in the prevention and treatment of AIDS.

These questions and related issues of science and public policy are addressed in this memorandum.



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