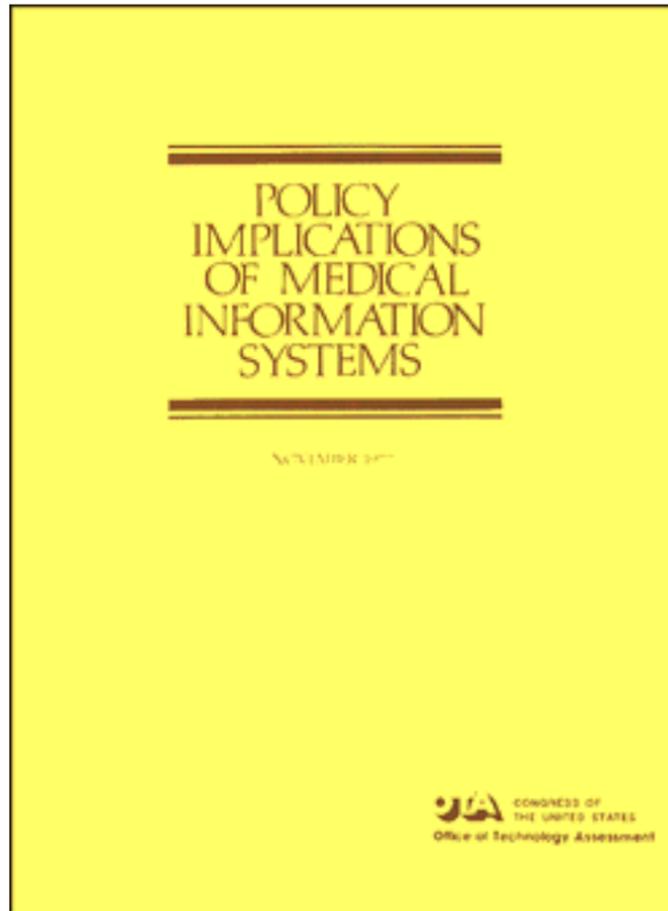


*Policy Implications of Medical Information
Systems*

December 1977

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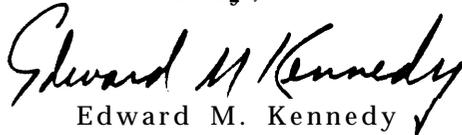
Committee on Human Resources
u. s. Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

Gentlemen:

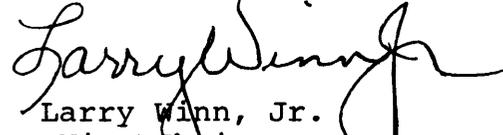
On behalf of the Board of the Office of Technology Assessment, we are pleased to forward the results of the assessment requested by your Committee.

This report provides a balanced and impartial analysis of medical information systems. We hope that this analysis will serve as a useful resource for continuing evaluation of the issues it discusses.

Sincerely,


Edward M. Kennedy
Chairman

Sincerely,


Larry Winn, Jr.
Vice Chairman

Enclosure

FOREWORD

This report is an assessment of the policy implications of computer-based medical information systems. It was requested by the Senate Committee on Human Resources because of increased concern over the quality and rising costs of medical care.

The Committee asked the Office of Technology Assessment to examine:

1. The benefits and limitations of medical information systems;
2. The factors influencing their adoption; and
3. Policy alternatives for the Federal Government with regard to such systems.

The report begins with a summary of the findings and conclusions and the alternative policies that could be pursued. Chapter 2 provides a perspective for the assessment. Three different kinds of medical information systems that were examined are described in chapter 3. Chapter 4 discusses the implications of these systems on such areas of concern as quality of medical care, clinical decisionmaking, malpractice litigation, and confidentiality of data about patients. Chapters considers the factors that influence the diffusion and use of information systems in the medical field. In conclusion, chapter 6 considers a range of policy alternatives for maximizing the benefits of information systems.

This study was conducted by staff of the OTA Health Program with assistance from an advisory panel, chaired by Kerr L. White. It was reviewed by the OTA Health Advisory Committee, chaired by Frederick C. Robbins, and by a wide variety of individuals in the medical field, industry, universities, consumer organizations, and Government. The resulting report is a synthesis and does not necessarily represent the views of any of the individuals who participated in the assessment or the review process.



DANIEL DeSIMONE
Acting Director

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