

Selected Topics in Federal Health Statistics

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FOREWORD

The proliferation of Federal health programs since the advent of Medicare and Medicaid some 15 years ago has spawned a vast number of separate systems for the collection of health data. The demand for information describing these programs is immense and keeps growing. It now costs an estimated \$100 million a year for Federal health statistical activities.

This report reviews and assesses Federal data collection activities and finds them to be overlapping, fragmented, and often duplicative. It was prepared at the request of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources and the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce.

The report is divided into two parts. Part I inventories the different health data collection systems administered by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and other Federal agencies, outlines the problems of duplication and fragmentation that occur, and addresses the possibilities of improving the coordination of these systems.

Part II is a directory of statutory provisions that govern the collection of health data by the Public Health Service and the Health Care Financing Administration. It is a convenient reference that Members of Congress can consult before enacting new data requirements. It may also be useful to executive agencies in the coordination of existing ones.

This study was conducted by the OTA Health Group staff. We are grateful for the advice and guidance provided in this assessment by OTA's Health Advisory Committee, chaired by Dr. Frederick C. Robbins. The report, however, does not necessarily reflect the views of any individual member of the Committee.



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