

*Medical Monitoring and Screening in the  
Workplace: Results of a Survey*

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**MEDICAL  
MONITORING  
and  
SCREENING  
in the  
WORKPLACE**  
RESULTS OF A SURVEY



Background  
Paper



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES  
OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT

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# Foreword

Screening of prospective employees for health status and certain behaviors and monitoring of workers' health are generally thought to be widespread in American workplaces, but few data exist about either practice. This OTA Background Paper presents the results of a survey of 1,500 U.S. companies, the 50 largest utilities, and the largest unions. The survey was designed to obtain information about the types of medical monitoring and screening done in the United States and the extent of their use. OTA finds that virtually all large U.S. employers use some of these tests.

OTA commissioned the survey in support of its October 1990 OTA assessment *Genetic Monitoring and Screening in the Workplace*. In contrast to that report, which focused on the issues associated specifically with *genetic* monitoring and screening in the workplace, this Background Paper discusses survey results concerning the more general topic of *medical* monitoring and screening as well as providing additional information about genetic monitoring and screening. The 1990 assessment was requested by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation; House Committee on Energy and Commerce; and the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. It was also endorsed by the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

This Background Paper documents:

- attitudes of corporate personnel and health officers about the appropriateness of medical and genetic monitoring and screening;
- some of the corporate criteria used to set health and other qualifications for employment;
- policies on informing employees and job applicants of test results;
- provisions for company and employee access to medical records; and
- the cost-effectiveness estimates for various tests.

OTA was assisted in preparing the survey instrument and Background Paper by a panel of advisors selected for their expertise and diverse points of view on the issues covered in the report. Advisory panelists were drawn from industry, academia, labor organizations, legal, scientific and professional organizations, research organizations, and Federal agencies.

We gratefully acknowledge the contribution of each of these individuals. OTA, however, remains solely responsible for the contents of this Background Paper.



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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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<sup>1</sup> Through September 1989.