

*Medical Devices and the Veterans
Administration*

February 1985

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**MEDICAL DEVICES
AND THE VETERANS
ADMINISTRATION**

A TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

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



**OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT
U.S. CONGRESS**

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Preface

This technical memorandum is part of a larger assessment of Federal policies and the medical devices industry, requested by the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources. In its endorsement of the overall assessment, the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs requested the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) to address specifically the activities of the Veterans Administration (VA) regarding device development and procurement. The VA is an important provider of medical devices and services for diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of the veteran population.

OTA found that the VA's current system of medical device-related research, development, evaluation, procurement, and use has a number of weaknesses. Better analytical methods for evaluating and procuring the most appropriate devices at least cost could be applied at various points in technology development and use. In addition, VA research and development, evaluation, and procurement could be better integrated. Several new VA programs and committees may improve the evaluation and procurement processes and help to integrate the functions, especially the purchase of major new medical technologies.

Valuable guidance was provided by the advisory panel for the OTA assessment on *Federal Policies and the Medical Devices Industry*, chaired by Richard R. Nelson, Professor of Economics, Yale University. A large number of persons in the VA and in the medical devices industry were consulted. John C. Langenbrunner, analyst, is the principal author of this technical memorandum. Other key OTA staff involved in its development were Cynthia P. King, Katherine E. Locke, and Jane E. Sisk.



JOHN H. GIBBONS
Director

Advisory Panel for Federal Policies and the Medical Devices Industry

Richard R. Nelson, *Chair*
Institute for Social and Policy Studies, Yale University
New Haven, CT

William F. Ballhaus
International Numatics, Inc.
Beverly Hills, CA

Ruth Farrisey
Massachusetts General Hospital
Boston, MA

Peter Barton Hutt
Covington & Burling
Washington, DC

Alan R. Kahn
Consultant
Cincinnati, OH

Grace Kraft
Kidney Foundation of the Upper Midwest
Cannon Falls, MN

Joyce Lashof
School of Public Health
University of California
Berkeley, CA

Penn Lupovich
Group Health Association
Washington, DC

Victor McCoy
Paralyzed Veterans of America
Washington, DC

Robert M. Moliter
Medical Systems Division
General Electric Co.
Washington, DC

Louise B. Russell
The Brookings Institution
Washington, DC

Earl J. Saltzgeber
Foremost Contact Lens Service, Inc.
Salt Lake City, UT

Rosemary Stevens
Department of History and Sociology of Science
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA

Allan R. Thieme
Amigo Sales, Inc.
Albuquerque, NM

Eric von Hippel
Sloan School
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, MA

Edwin C. Whitehead
Technicon Corp.
Tarrytown, NY

OTA Project Staff: Medical Devices and the Veterans Administration

Roger Herdman, *Assistant Director, OTA
Health and Life Sciences Division*

Clyde J. Behney, *Health Program Manager*

Jane E. Sisk, *Project Director*

Cynthia P. King, *Study Director-'*

John C. Langenbrunner, *Study Director'*

Katherine E. Locke, *Research Assistant*

Ann Covalt, *Editor*

Virginia Cwalina, *Administrative Assistant*

Rebecca I. Erickson, *P. C./Word Processor Specialist*

Brenda L. Miller, *P. C./Word Processor Specialist*

Jennifer Nelson, *Secretary*³

Principal Contractor

Ralph Bradburd, Williams College

¹ From December 1983.

² Until November 1983

³ Until January 1984.

Glossary of Acronyms

AMVETS	—American Veterans of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam	MEDIIPP	—Medical District Initiated Program Planning
BVA	—Blinded Veterans Association	MR&A	—Marketing Research and Analysis
CID	—Commercial Item Description	NAS	—National Academy of Sciences
CT	—computed tomography	NMR	—nuclear magnetic resonance
DAV	—Disabled American Veterans	NSO	—National Service Officer
DM&S	—Department of Medicine and Surgery	OTA	—Office of Technology Assessment
DOD	—Department of Defense	PSAS	—Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Service
DRGs	—diagnosis-related groups	PTEC	—Prosthetic Technology Evaluation Committee
ETIP	—Experimental Technology Incentives Program	PVA	—Paralyzed Veterans of America
FDA	—Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services	R&D	—research and development
FSS	—Federal Supply Schedule	Rehabilitation R&D	—Rehabilitation Research and Development Service
GAO	—General Accounting Office	T&E	—Testing and Evaluation Staff
GRECC	—Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Centers	VA	—Veterans Administration
HSR&D	—Health Services Research and Development Service	VAMKC	—VA Marketing Center
		VAPC	—VA Prosthetics Center
		VFW	—Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States