



**Congressional Budget Office**

# **CBO's Roles and Responsibilities**

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Congressional Budget Office  
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## **CBO's History and Mission**

- **Created by the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974**
- **Statutory mission: To assist the Congress in preparing and analyzing budget**
- **Most work supports activities of the budget and appropriations committees**
- **Nonpartisan; does not make policy recommendations**



## **CBO's Responsibilities**

- **Helps the Congress formulate its budget plan**
- **Provides the Congress with cost estimates to help it stay within its budget plan**
- **Assesses the impact of federal mandates**
- **Provides studies to help the Congress consider budgetary and economic issues**



## What CBO Does NOT Do

- **Make policy recommendations (strictly nonpartisan; no judgments about a legislative proposal's “merits”)**
- **Write legislation (CBO evaluates different proposals, options)**
- **Implement programs, regulations, enforce budget rules (that's the Executive Branch)**
- **Audit spending or receipts (that's GAO)**



## **CBO's Organization and Staffing**

- **About 235 full-time staff**
- **Director (4-year term) appointed jointly by the House Speaker and Senate President pro tem**
- **Director appoints all CBO staff, solely on the basis of professional competence, not political affiliation**
- **70+% of CBO professional staff hold advanced degrees in economics, public policy, public administration, or a related field**



# Divisional Responsibilities

- **CBO organized according to responsibilities for budget and program analysis:**
  - **Budget Analysis**
  - **Macroeconomic Analysis**
  - **Tax Analysis**
  - **Program areas:**
    - **Health and Human Resources (includes long-term modeling group)**
    - **Microeconomic and Financial Studies**
    - **National Security**



## Budget Analysis Division

- **Annual baseline (*Budget and Economic Outlook* report each January)**
- ***Analysis of President's Budget* (usually published in March or early April)**
- **Estimates for *Budget Options* volume**
- **Cost estimates (except taxes)**
- **Estimates of state and local mandates**
- **Scorekeeping (appropriations, mandatory spending and receipts)**



# Helping the Congress Develop Its Budget Plan

- **Prepares a 10-year baseline each winter to serve as a starting point**
- **Compares legislative options, including the President's, to the baseline**
- **Assists the Congress in developing a “budget resolution” = “budget plan”**



# Health Staff at CBO

## Budget Analysis Division

**Keith Fontenot, Deputy Assistant Director**

- **Health Systems and Medicare Cost Estimates Unit**

**Tom Bradley, Unit Chief**

- **Low Income Health Programs and Prescription Drugs Unit**

**Kate Massey, Unit Chief**



# Health Staff at CBO

## Health and Human Resources Division

### Bruce Vavrichek, Assistant Director

- Jim Baumgardner, Deputy Assistant Director
- Phil Ellis, Unit Chief (Health Policy Analysis)
- Joyce Manchester, Unit Chief (Long Term Modeling Group)



# Recent Work in Health

- **The Congressional Budget Office recently released two volumes related to health care financing and delivery:**
  - *Key Issues in Analyzing Major Health Insurance Proposals*
  - *Budget Options, Volume 1: Health Care*
    - **Volume 2 of Budget Options (to be released in 2009) will cover non-health issues**



# Recent Work in Health

**The two volumes:**

- **Reflect the strong interest of policymakers in health financing and health care issues**
- **Identify key issues in analyzing major health insurance proposals (*Key Issues*)**
- **Provide estimates of budget impact of specific proposals (*Health Options*)**

**Neither report makes any recommendations**