

Introduction to the U.S. Government Accountability Office and Health Care Team

Dr. Marjorie Kanof
Managing Director, Health Care Team
January 15, 2009

Outline

- Mission and Organization
- How GAO Conducts its Work
- Performance and Impact
- Looking Ahead
- Health Care Engagements

Mission

Support the Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and help improve the performance and ensure the accountability of the federal government for the benefit of the American people.

GAO's Independence

- Headed by the Comptroller General
 - Joint selection/appointment process involving the Congress and the President
 - 15 year term of office
 - Can only be removed by impeachment or joint resolution of Congress for specified reasons
- GAO staff at all levels are civil servants, not political appointees

GAO's Staff and Internal Organization

- About 3,150 employees
- 13 “Mission” teams
- Office of General Counsel
- Staff departments
- Locations: D.C. Headquarters (75%) and Field offices (25%)

Sources of GAO's Work

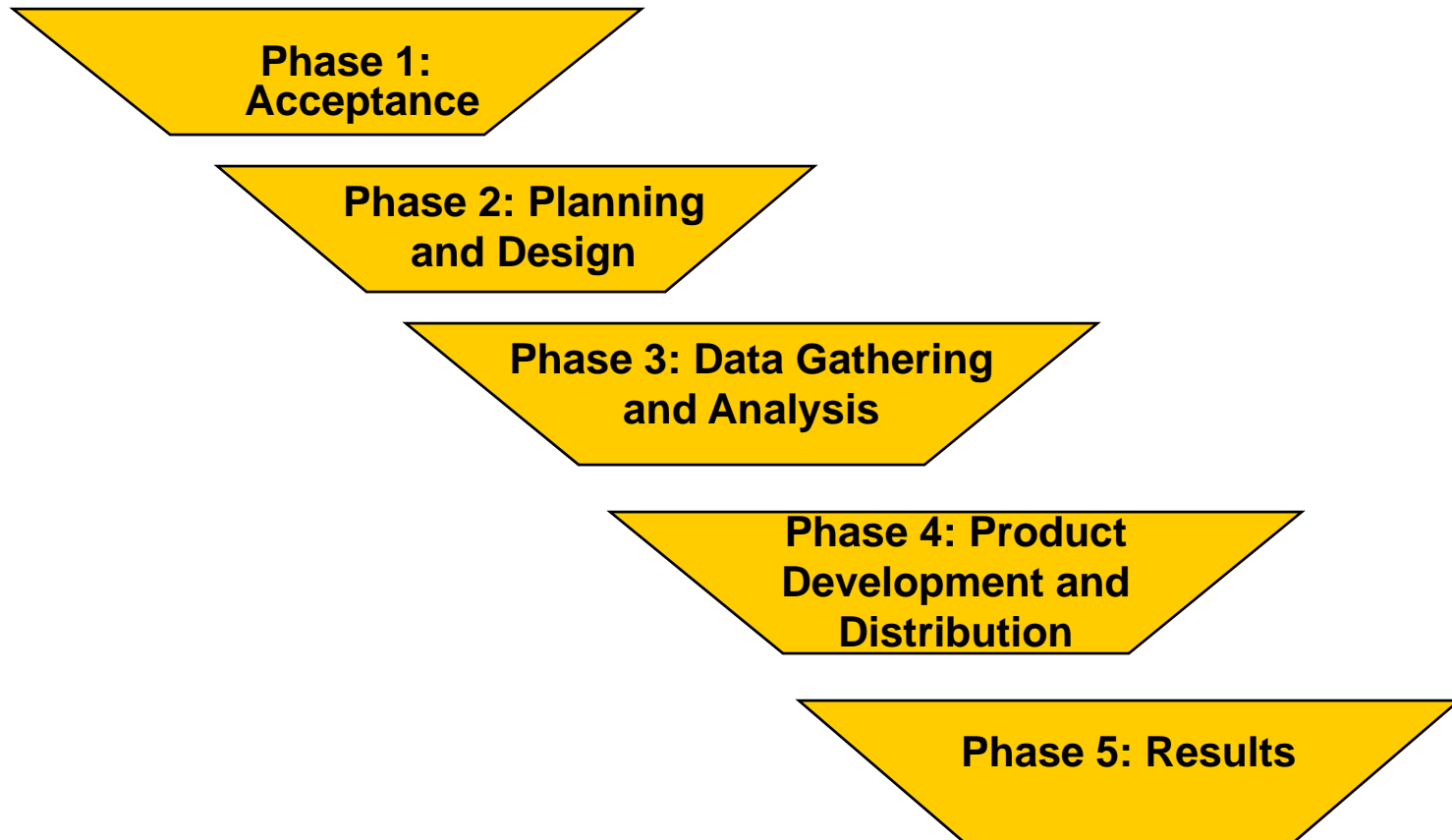
- Congressional Requests and Mandates
 - 94 % of GAO's work in FY 2008
- Engagements initiated under the Comptroller General's statutory authority
 - 6 % of GAO's work in FY 2008
- Work selected based on:
 - annual strategic plan
 - ongoing dialogue with Congress
 - weekly Engagement Acceptance Meetings

Congressional Protocols

To ensure adherence to GAO's core values, effective management practices, and efficient use of resources, GAO will initiate work according to the following priorities:

1. Congressional mandates
2. Senior congressional leader and committee leader requests
3. Individual Member requests, with additional consideration given to requests from Members who are on a committee of jurisdiction

Overview of The GAO Engagement Process



Engagement Process: Contact with Congressional Clients

- Pre-request discussions of potential work
- Letter acknowledgement of GAO's receipt of request
- For work that GAO agrees to do: acceptance letter
- Meeting with requester's staff to gain a better understanding of the requester's need for information and the nature of the research questions
- Letter confirming agreement reached with requester on the terms of the engagement
- Periodic status briefings
- Notification when the draft will be sent to agency for comment

FY 2008 Performance

Measures	FY 08 Target	FY 08 Actual
Financial benefits (in billions)	\$40.0	\$58.1
Other benefits	1,150	1,398
Testimonies	220	304
Products with recommendations	60%	66%
Recommendations implemented	80%	83%
Timeliness (based on client feedback)	95%	95%

GAO's High Risk Program Areas

- GAO has identified high-risk programs that fall into four areas:
 - Broad-based transformations
 - Federal contracting
 - Tax law administration
 - Insurance and benefit programs

21st Century Challenges

Issued February 2005

Based on GAO's work for the Congress

Provides background, framework, and questions

Covers entitlements and other mandatory spending, discretionary spending, and tax policies and programs

1/15/2009

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

21st Century Challenges

Reexamining the Base of the Federal Government

GAO-05-325SP

FEBRUARY 2005

Transitioning to the New Congress and Administration

- GAO outreach to the new Congress and their staff, as well as to transition teams and members of the new administration
- GAO Transition Website and printed materials addressing:
 - key points from GAO “insight and foresight” products (e.g., High-Risk List and 21st Century Challenges report)
 - agency-specific program issues
 - crosscutting/government-wide issues
 - urgent issues
- http://www.gao.gov/transition_2009/

Health Care Issue Areas

- Medicare, Medicaid, SCHIP
- Public Health, Disaster Preparedness
- Defense Health Care (VA, DOD)
- Private Health Insurance
- Prescription Drugs

GAO's Health Care Team

- 200 staff members; over 90% working on audit engagements
- Located in D.C. and 3 field offices: Atlanta, Chicago, and Seattle
- 70 – 80 reports and testimonies per year

Contact Information

GAO Health Care Team: 202-512-7114

See also contact list provided by NHPF for the Health Care
Team Managing Director and Directors