



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

October 29, 1997

S. 999

A bill to specify the frequency of screening mammograms provided to women veterans by the Department of Veterans Affairs

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
on October 7, 1997*

Under current law, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) may provide mammography services to women veterans. As with other preventive measures, VA has developed guidelines for its primary care practitioners on the applicability and timeliness of mammography screening exams. VA's current guidelines recommend that women veterans 50 years of age and over be provided with a mammography exam every two years.

S. 999 would require VA to follow the mammography screening guidelines recently developed by the American Cancer Society, which recommend that women 40 years of age and over receive a mammogram every year. According to information from VA, its guidelines are currently under review by an internal committee in light of the new recommendations released by various organizations, including the American Cancer Society.

CBO estimates that enactment of S. 999 would increase spending subject to appropriation by about \$2 million a year. These costs would result from about 20,000 additional mammograms a year, assuming that most women between the ages of 50 and 69 who currently get mammograms from VA every two years would get them annually, and that women veterans between the ages of 40 and 49 would receive mammograms from VA at about the same rate as those between the ages of 50 and 69 under the new guidelines. The bill may have no net budgetary impact if VA's internal review leads it to adopt the American Cancer Society's guidelines without legislative action.

Because the bill would not affect direct spending or receipts, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply. The bill contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The estimate was prepared by Shawn Bishop. The estimate was approved by Robert A. Sunshine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.