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### History and Purpose

In the modern medical world of rapidly diffusing technologies, the International Society of Technology Assessment in Health Care (ISTAHC) was organized to encourage research, education, cooperation and the exchange of information concerning the clinical and social implications of health care technologies, and to foster their optimal utilization. The term *technology* in this context includes the drugs, devices, and medical and surgical procedures utilized in health care as well as the varied organizational and supportive systems within which health care is provided.

Organized in May 1985, the Society's initial meeting was held in Copenhagen with 60 participants from 16 countries. Society membership is now over 600 with worldwide representation. The ISTAHC 8th Annual Meeting will be held June 14-17, 1992, in Vancouver, Canada.

The Society is primarily concerned with emerging medical technologies as they are developed, produced, disseminated, applied, and costed. Major issues of concern include:

- safety and efficacy
- cost and cost-effectiveness
- ethics
- quality of care
- access to health care
- appropriateness of application
- legal and regulatory considerations
- competing technologies

### Society Activities

To shed light on these important issues which, in turn, will foster and enhance the delivery of quality health care, the Society meets annually and also provides ongoing opportunities such as workshops, conferences, and special reports that provide effective international communication and a vibrant exchange of ideas. This intellectual environment is intended to spawn collaborative research on a transnational basis.

### Publications

All ISTAHC members receive the official journal of the Society, the *International Journal of Technology Assessment in Health Care*, published quarterly by Cambridge University Press, with occasional special supplements. Each issue of the journal provides not only essays on important themes, but also lively columns that give a global perspective on a range of technology-related subjects. This scholarly, peer-reviewed journal welcomes contributions from members and non-members alike, about technology and related health care subjects, including reports and reviews. Members also receive the quarterly *ISTAHC Newsletter*.

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