

- how much each of these drugs cost at the wholesale level, and at the retail level; and
- to what extent drug costs could be reduced if low-cost chemical equivalents were used wherever they were available.

To obtain the needed information, the Task Force requested the Public Health Service to undertake a special study, with major responsibility assigned to the Health Economics Branch of the Division of Medical Care Administration, and assistance provided by other agencies within the Bureau of Health Services, and by the Food and Drug Administration.

This project--probably the first of its kind ever undertaken--was aimed at developing a master list of the drugs which were most frequently prescribed and dispensed for the elderly in 1966, ^{a/} and which would account for about four-fifths of their drug use during that year.

^{a/} 1966 was selected as the study year, since it represented the most recent period for which essentially complete data were available for Task Force analysis beginning in June 1967.