

# Key health policymakers in the 107th Congress

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At the beginning of the 107th Congress, some significant leadership changes were made within the major House and Senate committees having jurisdiction over health care issues. These committees—the House Ways and Means Committee, House Energy and Commerce Committee, Senate Finance Committee, and Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee—involve more than 130 legislators and handle a broad array of public health, health care delivery, and financing issues. The following introduces these key committee leaders to Fellows, so they can become more familiar with some of the policymakers who have influence over issues that affect their patients and their profession.

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## House Ways and Means Committee

The House Committee on Ways and Means, the oldest congressional committee, has jurisdiction over tax measures, internal revenue service oversight, trade, and national trust funds, including the Medicare Trust Fund. Its Subcommittee on Health handles issues such as hospital and physician reimbursement under Medicare.

### Rep. William (Bill) Thomas (R-CA)

Representative Thomas became chair of the Committee on Ways and Means in January, replacing retiring chair Bill Archer (R-TX). During the previous six years, he chaired the panel's Subcommittee on Health, and, in 1998, he served as the administrative chair of the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare.

Representative Thomas is known for his active work on the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (BBA), which, among other provisions, expanded health care delivery options for Medicare beneficiaries. To address some of the concerns expressed by physicians, hospitals, and other health care providers about the financial impact of the BBA, Representative Thomas authored the Balanced Budget Refinement Act of 1999 (BBRA) as well as the Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP Benefits Improvement and Protection Act of 2000 (BIPA). Representative Thomas also introduced legislation in the 104th Congress that served as the basis of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).

Representative Thomas has been a member of the House of Representatives for 22 years. Before being elected to Congress, he served as a California State Assemblyman and as a professor of American government at Bakersfield College, Bakersfield, CA. For updated information on Representative Thomas' plans for health care in the 107th Congress, visit <http://tnd.house.gov>.

### Rep. Charles Rangel (R-NY)

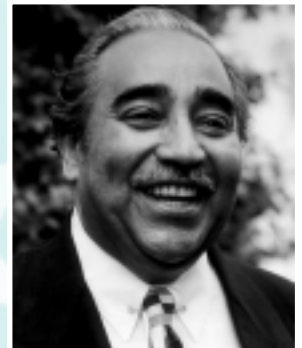
Representative Rangel was appointed the ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means in 1997. As a senior member of that committee, Representative Rangel has continually fought against cuts in the Medicare program and in the federal welfare system. Faithful to his New York teaching hospital constituency, he also was very active in the 106th Congress on issues related to graduate medical education. Before his tenure in the House of Representatives, Representative Rangel served four years in the New York State Assembly.

### Rep. Nancy Johnson (R-CT)

Representative Johnson is the newly appointed chair of the Ways and Means Health Subcommittee. As a long-time member of the subcommittee, Representative Johnson has been very active in health care reform issues. She played a major role in the construction of the BBA and its refinements, BBRA and BIPA, and is known for her stead-



Rep. Bill Thomas



Rep. Charles Rangel



Rep. Nancy Johnson

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fast support for extending Medicare coverage to cancer clinical trials. Representative Johnson founded the House Republican Task Force on Health Care in an effort to develop legislative proposals to control costs and ensure universal access to affordable care. Before being elected to Congress, Representative Johnson served as a member of the Connecticut State Senate.

#### **Rep. Fortney H. (Pete) Stark (D-CA)**

Representative Stark has served in the leadership of the Committee on Ways and Means since 1985, when he became chair of its Subcommittee on Health. In 1995, Representative Stark was named ranking minority member when the Republicans gained the majority in the House. During his tenure as chair, Representative Stark was one of the principal architects of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1989 (OBRA '89), which mandated the implementation of a Medicare physician fee schedule constructed according to a resource-based relative value scale. He also authored the Stark I and Stark II laws governing physician self-referrals.

Before Representative Stark was elected in 1972, he founded the Security National Bank in Walnut Creek, CA. He also served as Director of Common Cause, a citizen's lobbying group that works for reform in federal and state government.

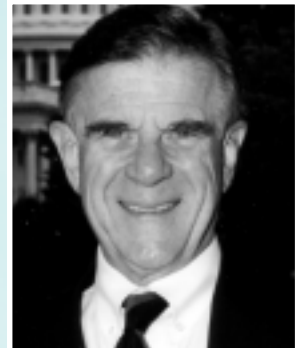
### **House Energy and Commerce Committee**

The House Committee on Energy and Commerce has jurisdiction over health programs financed by general revenues (as opposed to trust funds), including Medicare part B and physician payment issues, Medicaid, and programs managed by the agencies of the Public Health Service, including the Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Institutes of Health.

Known during the 104th to 106th Congresses simply as the House Commerce Committee, the committee's name was changed back this year to one held previously. Its jurisdiction also was changed somewhat, with much of its influence over insurance issues transferred to the newly renamed Committee on Financial Services. The committee's health issues are handled by its Subcommittee on Health (a newly renamed panel that no longer handles environmental issues).

#### **Rep. Billy Tauzin (R-LA)**

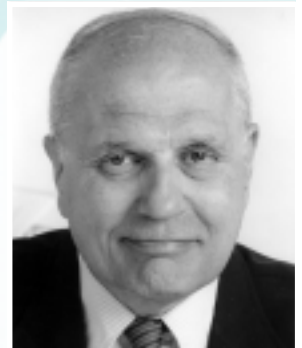
Representative Tauzin, known largely for his leadership on energy policy issues, was appointed the new chair of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce following the retirement of former Commerce Committee chair Tom Bliley (R-VA). A fiscal conservative, Representative Tauzin includes among his priorities as chair passage of a prescription drug benefit for seniors. He



Rep. Pete Stark



Rep. Billy Tauzin



Rep. John Dingell

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## Members of the House Health Subcommittees

### Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health

Nancy Johnson (R-CT), <i>Chair</i>	Pete Stark (D-CA), <i>Ranking member</i>
Jim McCrery (R-LA)	Gerald Kleczka (D-WI)
Philip Crane (R-IL)	John Lewis (D-GA)
Sam Johnson (R-TX)	Jim McDermott (D-WA)
Dave Camp (R-MI)	Karen Thurman (D-FL)
Jim Ramstad (R-MN)	Philip English (R-PA)
Jennifer Dunn (R-WA)	

### Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health

Michael Bilirakis (R-FL), <i>Chair</i>	Sherrod Brown (D-OH), <i>Ranking member</i>
Joe Barton (R-TX)	Henry Waxman (D-CA)
Fred Upton (R-MI)	Ted Strickland (D-OH)
James Greenwood (R-PA)	Tom Barrett (D-WI)
Nathan Deal (R-GA)	Lois Capps (D-CA)
Richard Burr (R-NC)	Ralph Hall (D-TX)
Ed Whitfield (R-KY)	Edolphus Towns (D-NY)
Greg Ganske, MD, FACS (R-IA)	Frank Pallone (D-NJ)
Charlie Norwood, DDS (R-GA)	Peter Deutsch (D-FL)
Barbara Cubin (R-WY)	Anna Eshoo (D-CA)
Heather Wilson (R-NM)	Bart Stupak (D-MI)
John Shadegg (R-AZ)	Elliot Engel (D-NY)
Charles Pickering (R-MS)	Albert Wynn (D-MD)
Ed Bryant (R-TN)	Gene Green (D-TX)
Robert Ehrlich (R-MD)	John Dingell (D-MI), <i>ex officio</i>
Steve Buyer (R-IN)	
Joseph Pitts (R-PA)	
Billy Tauzin (R-LA), <i>ex officio</i>	

## Members of the Senate Health Care Committees

### Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

James Jeffords (R-VT), <i>Chair</i>	Edward Kennedy (D-MA), <i>Ranking member</i>
Judd Gregg (R-NH)	Christopher Dodd (D-CT)
Bill Frist, MD, FACS (R-TN)	Tom Harkin (D-IA)
Mike DeWine (R-OH)	Barbara Mikulski (D-MD)
Mike Enzi (R-WY)	Jeff Bingaman (D-NM)
Tim Hutchinson (R-AR)	Paul Wellstone (D-MN)
Susan Collins (R-ME)	Patty Murray (D-WA)
Sam Brownback (R-KS)	Jack Reed (D-RI)
Chuck Hagel (R-NE)	John Edwards (D-NC)
Jeff Sessions (R-AL)	Hillary Clinton (D-NY)

### Finance Committee

Charles Grassley (R-IA), <i>Chair</i>	Max Baucus (D-MT), <i>Ranking member</i>
Orrin Hatch (R-UT)	John Rockefeller (D-WV)
Frank Murkowski (R-AK)	Tom Daschle (D-SD)
Don Nickels (R-OK)	John Breaux (D-LA)
Phil Gramm (R-TX)	Kent Conrad (D-ND)
Trent Lott (R-MS)	Bob Graham (D-FL)
James Jeffords (R-VT)	Jeff Bingaman (D-NM)
Fred Thompson (R-TN)	John Kerrey (D-MA)
Olympia Snowe (R-ME)	Robert Toricelli (D-NJ)
Jon Kyle (R-AZ)	Blanche Lincoln (D-AR)

voted for BIPA at the end of the 106th Congress to restore funding lost to Medicare from BBA and has served 12 terms in Congress.

### Rep. John Dingell (D-MI)

Representative Dingell, a well-known health care advocate, is the most senior member of the House, having served since 1955. He was chair of the Committee on Energy and Commerce for 14 years before becoming the ranking minority member of the Commerce Committee in 1995. Representative Dingell, a strong supporter of the Medicare and Medicaid programs, was a member of the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare.

In the 106th Congress, Representative Dingell and Rep. Charlie Norwood (R-GA) introduced the Patients' Bill of Rights, a comprehensive managed care reform proposal that passed the House with bipartisan support.

Before his tenure in the House, Representative Dingell was an assistant prosecutor.

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### Rep. Michael Bilirakis (R-FL)

Chair of the Subcommittee on Health (and its predecessor, the Subcommittee on Health and the Environment) since 1995, and representing a district predominantly composed of senior citizens, Representative Bilirakis has been at the forefront of drafting important health care legislation. His involvement in health care and his knowledge of the Medicare program led to his appointment to the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare. His efforts on the Energy and Commerce Committee have led to the passage of key health care bills, such as HIPAA, the Ryan White CARE Act for the treatment and support of AIDS patients, and the Trauma Care Systems Planning and Development Act.

Representative Bilirakis, before being elected to Congress in 1982, worked as an attorney and as a county and municipal judge.

### Rep. Sherrod Brown (D-OH)

Representative Brown, the ranking minority member on the Health Subcommittee, was elected in 1992 and immediately became involved in health care issues. He has authored and supported patient protection legislation for Medicare patients enrolled in managed care plans and is known for his active support of increasing federal support for cancer research, screening, and treatment.

Prior to his election to Congress, Representative Brown was a member of the Ohio State House. He also served as Ohio's Secretary of State.

## Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP) has a health issue jurisdiction that is roughly equivalent to that of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. The panel is responsible for all federal health programs funded by the Public Health Service, although it has no authority over the Medicare and Medicaid programs. As is more common in the Senate, most of the HELP Committee's work is done by the full panel, with little responsibility delegated to its Subcommittee on Public Health and Safety.

### Sen. James Jeffords (R-VT)

Senator Jeffords has chaired the HELP Committee since 1997. He is known for his relatively moderate stance on many health issues; in fact, he endorsed President Clinton's health care plan in 1993 and was a strong advocate for comprehensive managed care reform in the last Congress. As the HELP Committee Chair, Senator Jeffords says his highest priorities are children's health concerns, home health care, AIDS care and treatment, and the confidentiality of patient medical records. Before joining the Senate, Senator Jeffords served as a Vermont State Senator and in the U.S. House of Representatives.

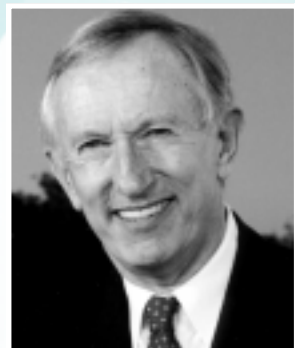
Sen. James Jeffords also serves as chair of the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Health Care (see page 21).



Rep. Michael Bilirakis



Rep. Sherrod Brown



Sen. James Jeffords

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### Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA)

Senator Kennedy has been active in health care reform for over 30 years. From 1987 to 1994, he chaired the HELP Committee's predecessor, the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee. An advocate for sweeping health care reform, Senator Kennedy sometimes encounters difficulties in his efforts to enact legislation that he believes will benefit health care patients. Nonetheless, he was successful in securing the passage of HIPAA—also known as the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill. An attorney, Senator Kennedy was elected in 1962 to fill the unexpired seat of John F. Kennedy.

### Sen. Bill Frist, MD, FACS (R-TN)

Thoracic and transplant surgeon Bill Frist, MD, FACS, elected in 1994, is the first practicing physician to hold office in the Senate since 1928. He was rewarded with a seat on the HELP Committee and immediately took an active role in health care policymaking. Senator Frist was a strong force in the passage of HIPAA, as well as legislation requiring health plans to allow at least 48-hour hospital stays for mothers and newborns. He also chaired the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare.

As chair of the HELP Committee's Subcommittee on Public Health, Senator Frist has focused on medical savings accounts, reform of the Food and Drug Administration, the Ryan White CARE Act, organ donation, and trauma care system development.

## Senate Finance Committee

The Senate Finance Committee may be viewed as the counterpart to the House Committee on Ways and Means. This panel handles revenue, trade, customs, and all health care programs that are authorized under the Social Security Act and financed by taxes and trust funds—including Medicare Part A and Medicare Part B. This committee handles Medicaid policy, as well. Again, most of the substantive work of the panel is done at the full committee level. Over the years, the Finance Committee has accrued more members from rural states, which could lead to an even greater focus on matters pertaining to rural health.

### Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA)

Senator Grassley is the newly appointed chair of the Senate Finance Committee, replacing the defeated Sen. William Roth (R-DE). Given that he spent three years as the chair of the Senate Aging Committee, Senator Grassley has been engaged in health care issues of concern to the elderly for quite some time. Senator Grassley is most known for his desire to bring health care equality to rural areas by providing federal support for the nation's small town hospitals and physicians. Prior to his election to the Senate, Senator Grassley was a working farmer in Iowa.



Sen. Edward Kennedy



Sen. Bill Frist



Sen. Charles Grassley

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### Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT)

In addition to a new chair, the Senate Finance Committee has a new ranking minority member, Senator Max Baucus. As a member of the Finance Committee, and now with a leadership role, Senator Baucus has always considered health issues among his main priorities. He has consistently supported legislation for cancer prevention and treatment, as well as BBA relief for rural hospitals and physicians.

Senator Baucus was elected to office in 1978 after practicing law and serving in the Montana State Legislature and the House of Representatives.

### Sen. John D. Rockefeller IV (D-WV)

Sen. “Jay” Rockefeller, the ranking minority member of the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Health Care, has been a leader in health care delivery and financing issues for nearly 20 years. Senator Rockefeller was one of the principal architect’s of OBRA ’89 and the Medicare physician fee schedule. He was also a member of the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare and one of its predecessor panels in the late 1980s, the Pepper Commission (the Bipartisan Commission on Comprehensive Health Care).

Senator Rockefeller moved to West Virginia in 1964 as a VISTA volunteer. Since then he has served as the state’s Governor, as a member of the State House of Delegates, and as a U.S. senator since 1985. 



Sen. Max Baucus



Sen. Jay Rockefeller