

Prospects for the 108th Congress

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Changes in the composition of the 108th Congress present significant leadership changes that may affect the outcome of health care legislation. The midterm elections shifted the control and agenda of both houses to the Republicans. Perhaps one of the most promising developments for surgery was the election of Sen. Bill Frist, MD, FACS (R-TN), by his colleagues to serve as the majority leader.

The individuals described in this article are the new leaders of important congressional committees that have jurisdiction over national health care issues. Hence, they will be the focus of many of the College's education and outreach efforts.

Senate Majority Leader

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

Dr. Frist, a thoracic and transplant surgeon, was elected in 1994 and is the first practicing physician to hold office in the Senate since 1928. His initial assignment to the influential Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) committee gave Senator Frist frontline responsibility for developing and implementing health care policies and reforms for the nation. As chair of the HELP Subcommittee on Public Health, he provided important direction in the following areas: the Trauma Care Systems Planning and Development Act, medical savings accounts, reform of the Food and Drug Administration, the Ryan White CARE Act for the treatment and support of AIDS patients, and organ donation.

His experience was most helpful in drafting legislation requiring health plans to allow at least 48-hour hospital stays for mothers and newborns and in the formulation of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). He was also a member of the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare, which explored how the nation would respond to a growing number of beneficiaries in the next 20 years. His Republican colleagues selected Senator Frist to serve as majority leader when Sen. Trent Lott (R-MS) resigned his position in December 2002.

Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

The Senate HELP Committee is responsible for all federal programs administered by the Public Health Service, including the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. The new leadership of the full committee has shifted the responsibilities of the Subcommittee on Public Health to the full committee.

Sen. Judd Gregg (R-NH)

As the new chair of the HELP Committee, Senator Gregg has outlined several goals, including preserving access to health insurance, improving access for the uninsured, expanding medical research, and increasing the number of community health centers. Before joining the Senate in 1993, he served two terms as governor of New Hampshire and as a member in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA)

Senator Kennedy has been an active and vocal advocate of health care reform throughout his 30 years in the Senate. Last year, he joined Dr. Frist in drafting essential bioterrorism response legislation. From 1987 to 1994, he chaired the Senate Labor and Hu-



Sen. Bill Frist



Sen. Judd Gregg



Sen. Edward Kennedy

man Resources Committee (now the HELP committee). Senator Kennedy, with former Sen. Nancy Kassebaum (R-KS), cosponsored and successfully secured the passage of HIPAA. He has long supported a Medicare drug benefit and opposed medical liability reform efforts.

Senate Finance Committee

The Senate Finance Committee is responsible for all legislation that governs revenue, trade, customs, and health care programs authorized by the Social Security Act and financed by taxes and trust funds, including Medicare Part A and Medicare Part B. This committee also provides global direction for Medicaid policy. Actual implementation of the Medicaid program remains the responsibility of the states. Due to the smaller size of the Senate, most of the substantive work of the panel is conducted at the full committee level.

Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA)

Senator Grassley reassumes his position as chair of the Finance Committee. He is an advocate for health care equality for rural areas, including increased support for the nation's small-town hospitals and physicians. His previous experience as chair of the Senate Aging Committee has continued with active involvement in health care issues of concern to elderly people.

Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT)

Senator Baucus resumes his role as Ranking Minority Member of the Finance Committee and continues his active support for cancer prevention and treatment legislation. He has continued efforts to update the Balanced Budget Act, seeking financial relief for rural hospitals and physicians. He was elected to the Senate in 1978 following a career in law, the Montana State Legislature, and the U.S. House.

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

Sen. 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. He was a principal architect of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1989 (OBRA), which introduced the Medicare physician fee schedule. He has a long history of reviewing Medicare reform options, having served on the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare in the 1990s and, in the early 1980s, the Pepper Commission, which examined possible solutions to the problems of health care delivery in the future. Before his election to the Senate, Senator Rockefeller served as governor of West Virginia and as a member of the State House of Delegates. He assumed his role in the Senate in 1985.



Sen. Charles Grassley



Sen. Max Baucus



Sen. John Rockefeller

House Committee on Ways and Means

One of the oldest congressional committees, the Ways and Means Committee has responsibility for all tax measures, Internal Revenue Service oversight, trade, and national trust funds, including the Medicare Trust Fund. The Subcommittee on Health formulates legislation that addresses issues such as Medicare reimbursement for hospitals and physicians.

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

As chair of the committee and as a member of it for more than 25 years, Representative Thomas has been a leading force in the development of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, which expanded health care delivery options for Medicare beneficiaries. Congressman Thomas recently played a pivotal role in negotiating a fix to the baseline errors in the Medicare physician payment formula. His continued dedication to a long-term solution helped to secure \$54 billion in funding. Before his election to the Congress, he served as a California State Assemblyman and as a professor of American government at Bakersfield College in California.

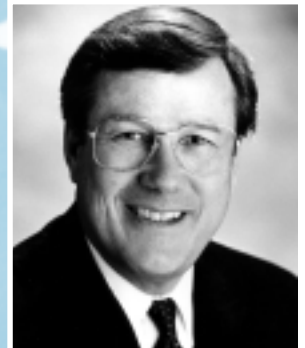
Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY)

Representative Rangel began his work as the Ranking Minority Member of the committee on Ways and Means in 1997. As a senior member of that committee, the congressman has continually fought against cuts in the Medicare programs and in the federal welfare system. Faithful to his New York teaching hospital constituency, he also has been an outspoken advocate for continued support of graduate medical education. Before his tenure in the House of Representatives, Representative Rangel served four years in the New York State Assembly.

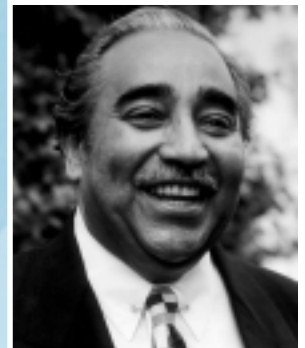
Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health

Rep. Nancy Johnson (R-CT)

As chair of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health, Representative Johnson has been a stalwart supporter of health care providers. During the 107th Congress she introduced legislation that would stop any further cuts in the Medicare fee schedule. As a long-time member of the subcommittee, Representative Johnson has been very active in health care reform issues and has demonstrated her commitment by introducing legislation that would extend Medicare coverage to pay for cancer clinical trials. Representative Johnson founded the House Republican Task Force on Health Care in an effort to develop legislative proposals that would control costs and ensure universal access to affordable care. Before her election to Congress, Representative Johnson served as a member of the Connecticut State Senate.



Rep. Bill Thomas



Rep. Charles Rangel



Rep. Nancy Johnson

Members of the Senate health care committees

Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

Judd Gregg (R-NH), *Chair*
Bill Frist, MD, FACS (R-TN)
Mike Enzi (R-WY)
Lamar Alexander (R-TN)
Christopher Bond (R-MO)
Mike DeWine (R-OH)
Pat Roberts (R-KS)
Jeff Sessions (R-AL)
John Ensign (R-NV)
Lindsey Graham (R-SC)
John Warner (R-VA)
Edward Kennedy (D-MA), *Ranking Minority Member*
Christopher Dodd (D-CT)
Tom Harkin (D-IA)
Barbara Mikulski (D-MD)
James Jeffords (I-VT)
Jeff Bingaman (D-NM)
Patty Murray (D-WA)
Jack Reed (D-RI)
John Edwards (D-NC)
Hillary Clinton (D-NY)

Finance Committee

Charles E. Grassley (R-IA), *Chair*
Orrin G. Hatch (R-UT)
Don Nickles (R-OK)
Trent Lott (R-MS)
Olympia J. Snow (R-ME)
Jon Kyl (R-AZ)
Craig Thomas (R-WY)
Rick Santorum (R-PA)
Bill Frist, MD, FACS (R-TN)
Gordon Smith (R-OR)
Jim Bunning (R-KY)
Max Baucus (D-MT), *Ranking Minority Member*
John D. Rockefeller IV (D-WV)
Tom Daschle (D-SD)
John Breaux (D-LA)
Kent Conrad (D-ND)
Bob Graham (D-FL)
James Jeffords (I-VT)
Jeff Bingaman (D-NM)
John F. Kerry (D-MA)
Blanche L. Lincoln (D-AR)

Members of the House health subcommittees

Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health

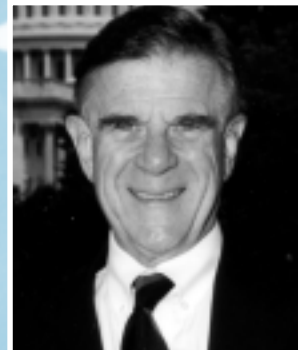
Nancy L. Johnson (R-CT), *Chair*
Jim McCreery (R-LA)
Philip M. Crane (R-IL)
Sam Johnson (R-TX)
Dave Camp (R-MI)
Jim Ramstad (R-MN)
Phil English (R-PA)
Jennifer Dunn (R-WA)
Fortney H. (Pete) Stark (D-CA), *Ranking Minority Member*
Gerald D. Kleczka (D-WI)
John Lewis (D-GA)
Jim McDermott (D-WA)
Lloyd Doggett (D-TX)

Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health

Michael Bilirakis (R-FL), *Chair*
Joe Barton (R-TX)
Fred Upton (R-MI)
James C. Greenwood (R-PA)
Nathan Deal (R-GA)
Richard Burr (R-NC)
Ed Whitfield (R-KY)
Charlie Norwood (R-GA), *Vice-Chair*
Barbara Cubin (R-WY)
Heather Wilson (R-NM)
John B. Shadegg (R-AZ)
Charles (Chip) Pickering (R-MS)
Steve Buyer (R-IN)
Joseph R. Pitts (R-PA)
Ernie Fletcher (R-KY)
Mike Ferguson (R-NJ)
Mike Rogers (R-MI)
W.J. (Billy) Tauzin (R-LA), *ex officio*
Sherrod Brown (D-OH), *Ranking Minority Member*
Henry A. Waxman (D-CA)
Ralph M. Hall (D-TX)
Edolphus Towns (D-NY)
Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ)
Anna G. Eshoo (D-CA)
Bart Stupak (D-MI)
Eliot L. Engel (D-NY)
Gene Green (D-TX)
Ted Strickland (D-OH)
Lois Capps (D-CA)
Bart Gordon (D-TN)
Diana DeGette (D-CO)
Christopher John (D-LA)
John Dingell (D-MI), *ex officio*

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

Representative Stark has been a leader within the Committee on Ways and Means since 1985, when he became chair of its Subcommittee on Health. In 1995, when Republicans gained a majority of the House, Representative Stark was named Ranking Minority Member of the committee. During his tenure as chair, Representative Stark was one of the principal architects of OBRA '89, which mandated the implementation of a Medicare physician fee schedule using a resource-based relative value scale. He also authored laws that limited patient referrals to services in which the physician holds a vested interest. 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.



Rep. Pete Stark

House Energy and Commerce Committee

The House Committee on Energy and Commerce has statutory authority for those health programs financed by general revenues (as opposed to trust funds). Their jurisdiction includes: Medicare Part B and physician payment issues, as well as Medicaid; 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.

Rep. Billy Tauzin (R-LA)

Representative Tauzin, known for his leadership on energy policy issues, continues his position as chair of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. His health care priorities this year include passage of a prescription drug benefit for seniors and medical liability reform. He has served more than 12 terms in Congress.



Rep. Billy Tauzin

Rep. John Dingell (D-MI)

Representative Dingell has served in the House since 1955. As one of the most senior members of Congress, he has continued to be an outspoken supporter of health care reforms for Medicare beneficiaries. He served as member of the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare. 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. In the 106th Congress, both he and Rep. Charles 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 in Michigan.



Rep. John Dingell

Subcommittee on Health

Rep. Michael Bilirakis (R-FL)

As chair of the Subcommittee on Health since 1995, and the representative of a district predominately composed of senior citizens, Representative Bilirakis has been a leader in the development of some of the most important health care legislation in recent years. His knowledge of Medicare and the nation's health care delivery system led to his appointment to the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare. His efforts on the Energy and Commerce Committee have meant passage of key health care bills, such as HIPAA, the Ryan White CARE Act, and the Trauma Care Systems Planning and Development Act. Representative Bilirakis, before being elected to Congress in 1982, was an attorney and held county and municipal judicial positions.

Rep. Sherrod Brown (D-OH)

Representative Brown, the Ranking Minority Member on the Health Subcommittee, was elected in 1992 and immediately devoted a great deal of attention to health care issues. He has authored and supported patient protection legislation for Medicare patients enrolled in managed care plans and is known for his efforts to increase federal support for cancer research, screening, and treatment. Before his election to Congress, Representative Brown was a member of the Ohio State House and served as Ohio's Secretary of State. [Q](#)



Rep. Michael Bilirakis



Rep. Sherrod Brown