



THE VOICE OF  
DENTAL EDUCATION

## KEY COMMITTEES IN CONGRESS AFFECTING THE OUTCOME ON ORAL HEALTH, DENTAL EDUCATION AND DENTAL RESEARCH ISSUES

Only a limited number of committees have a direct impact on issues of importance to academic dentistry and dental and craniofacial research. Most of the substantive work on an issue is done at the committee and subcommittee level. Below is a brief summary of each committee's responsibilities:

**APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEES**—The House and Senate Appropriations Committees allocate the discretionary money spent by the Federal government each year for non-entitlement programs (such as Social Security and Medicare). Other committees can *authorize* spending for a particular program or agency, *but only the appropriations committee can actually provide the money*. The major appropriations subcommittees in both chambers that have jurisdiction over oral health, dental education and research issues are the Subcommittees on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies.

**BUDGET COMMITTEES**—The House and Senate Budget Committees set the spending and taxing priorities for the entire government. These committees provide targets for each of the other committees regarding how much they can spend, or how much revenue they must raise. Budget committees are responsible for a yearly *Budget Resolution* that establishes the amounts for the targets. Budget committees also, when required, consolidate authorizing language reported out by many other committees in response to instructions contained in a Budget Resolution in what is referred to as a *Budget Reconciliation Act*.

**SENATE HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS COMMITTEE**—This committee has responsibility for authorizing education, labor, health, and public welfare programs including biomedical research and development; public health; student loans; higher education issues, and most health related agencies except entitlement programs such as Medicare and Medicaid. Sometimes it may share responsibility for certain health-related issues with the Senate Finance Committee (see below).

**SENATE INDIAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**—This Senate select committee conducts studies of any and all matters pertaining to problems and opportunities of Indians, including but not limited to Indian education, health, special services, and loan programs and Indian claims against the United States.

**HOUSE EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE COMMITTEE**—This committee handles authorization of programs and policies from pre-K-12 through higher education, poverty programs and a broad array of labor issues.

**HOUSE ENERGY AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE**—This committee has authorizing jurisdiction over biomedical research and development, health and health facilities including public health and quarantine (except health care supported by payroll deductions such as Medicare). The Subcommittee on Health is where most of the oral health, dental education and dental research issues are handled.

**HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE**—This committee has responsibility for all tax laws and authorizing many major government programs. The major subcommittee through which oral health, dental education and dental research issues are considered is the Subcommittee on Health.

**SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**—This committees of both the House and Senate have authorizing jurisdiction in the Senate over all tax and revenue raising legislation and over authorizing many health programs under the Social Security Act and health programs financed by a specific tax or trust fund (Medicare, Medicaid).

**VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEES**—These committees have jurisdiction over all government programs affecting veterans health such as veterans hospitals, medical care, and treatment of veterans; including education of veterans as well as veterans dental and oral health research.