

Recent FDS Legislative Achievements

- Worked to add provisions within the National Defense Authorization Act for 2008 which substantially increases the amount of annual special pay (ASP) for federal dentists. For dental officers with less than three years of service, ASP would increase from \$4,000 to \$10,000 per year. For those with less than 10 years of service, ASP would increase from \$6,000 to \$12,000 per year; and if you have more than 10 years of service, ASP would be \$15,000 per year.
- Proposed legislation to make military student loan repayments tax exempt.
- Lobbied Congress to extend the time in which Guard and Reservists coming off active duty could receive dental benefits. The period would be extended from 90 to 180 days.
- Strongly supported a bill (H.R. 1808) to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Augusta, Ga., as the “Charlie Norwood Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.” The bill was signed into law in November 2007.
- Achieved long-standing ADA policy by changing the rank of the senior dental officer in the Air Force to Major General.
- Expanded the eligibility of dental officers to receive additional special pay. This provision eliminated an inequity in the bonus pays for dentists undergoing residency education.
- Increased the maximum special pay bonus for reserve officers in critically short wartime specialties from \$10,000 to \$25,000.
- Increased the maximum stipend for the Health Professions Scholarship Program to \$30,000 per year and the maximum grant amount for the Financial Assistance Program for residents in specialty training from \$15,000 to \$45,000.
- Increased the maximum amount eligible for loan repayment from \$22,000 to \$60,000.
- Increased the accession bonus limit from \$30,000 to \$200,000. At the same time, the maximum accession bonus for critically short wartime skills was increased to \$400,000.
- Helped influence TRICARE to cover the cost of institutional and general anesthesia cost for children age five and under, and for those patients with developmental, physical or mental disabilities.
- Prohibited the Department of Defense from converting a number of military dental officer positions to civilian positions until the Secretary of Defense submits evidence that these conversions will not increase cost or diminish the quality of care not only for 2007, but for future years as well.
- The ADA successfully lobbied for restoration of the previously eliminated functions for the Chief of Navy Dentistry, which the ADA believes meets the intent of the Council on Government Affairs’ recommendation. Specifically, the functions of the Chief of Navy Dentistry (as restored in section 5138) are (1) to establish professional standards and policies for dental practice; (2) to initiate and recommend action pertaining to complements, strength, appointments, advancement, training assignment, and transfer of dental personnel; and (3) to serve as the advisor for the Bureau on all matters relating directly to dentistry.
- Worked with the VA to ensure that the VA treats veterans returning from war by asking that private practice dentists treat these patients when VA dentists are not available to do so in a timely manner.
- Obtained significant additional funding for military dental research in 2006—increasing the funding by \$600,000 to a level of \$4 million.

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