



How Does WWAMI Benefit Alaska?

Saving the State Money While Providing a Top Tier Education. Training the future physician workforce is costly. It can cost over \$100 million to start a new medical school. WWAMI allows Alaskans to have a high quality regional medical school without the high cost of an independent medical school.

The per capita cost for public medical education in Alaska is **\$4.62**. This is far less than other states with comparable populations, such as North Dakota and South Dakota, where the per capita costs are over \$20.00 per student. In Texas, the state spends \$22.74 per capita for medical student education, comparable to most other states.

Nearly every other state in the country supports public medical education through their respective university systems, and at a much higher cost than Alaska's budget for the WWAMI program. The average annual state support per year in Alaska for the clinical training years is **\$50,000** per student, compared to the national average state support of \$102,000 per student.

Strong Return on Investment for the State. The program is not a drain on public resources, it is a financial plus. Of the funds provided by the State for WWAMI medical education, >70% is spent in the state. These funds pay for the Foundations Phase classroom instruction, and for management of 45 clerkships and 40 preceptorships, where over 200 physicians in Alaska participate as faculty teaching WWAMI medical students. An economic impact study of the WWAMI program in Montana (2011), found that for every dollar allocated to the program by the state, **\$5.14 dollars** was generated in the statewide economy-it is likely that Alaska enjoys a similar positive impact.

WWAMI graduates return to Alaska to practice medicine at a rate of 70%! This includes a 60% rate of Alaska WWAMI graduate return, and additional number of WWAMI graduates from other states who move to Alaska. Of the Alaska WWAMI graduates who do not return, there is a requirement to 'payback' the state's investment, thus further reducing risk to the state. (Non-returning students must pay back \$75,000).

The WWAMI program not only creates physicians, who return to Alaska to practice, but it creates jobs- jobs for faculty and staff to educate medical students, and upon returning to Alaska, the new physicians further contribute to the growth of the healthcare industry in Alaska. The economic impact of one primary care physician has been estimated at over \$1 million/year, with creation of an average of 5 fulltime staff positions, with both direct and multiplier factors fueling economic stimulus.

Addressing Physician Workforce Needs for Alaska. Alaska has a physician shortage, and relying on expensive recruitment (competing with the entire nation which has a shortage of primary care physicians) or using temporary locum tenens to staff clinics is not the answer. **Alaska must GROW IT'S OWN- educate Alaskans to be the next generation of Alaskan physicians!**