

Elizabeth Conway  
2910 Capstan Dr  
Anchorage, AK  
99516

March 24, 2015

Dear Finance Committee,

I am writing to express deep concern over the proposed elimination of the WWAMI program. I would like to share my experiences growing up as an Alaskan with dreams of becoming a physician.

There can be no question that Alaska struggles to have enough doctors to meet the many and varied needs of Alaskans. When I was in middle school, a close friend had a bout with cancer. She had to spend several months down in Seattle getting care, missing huge amounts of school. Her family's suffering must have been awful- at least one parent had to stay in Anchorage with the other children while their oldest was in a strange city thousands of miles away. Today, we might have the capacity to treat her cancer in Anchorage, a wonderful accomplishment. But taking care of my friend and children like her, as well as continuing to develop new solutions to Alaska's unique health care obstacles, requires a constant supply of doctors willing to make Alaska their home.

I first heard about the WWAMI program in middle school, when I started exploring the possibility of becoming a doctor. It was to my very great surprise to learn that the program based in my hometown was ranked first in the nation for training primary care doctors. I had no idea that I could learn to be a doctor in my hometown, much less at one of the best schools in the world. At that moment, my dream of becoming a doctor in a small Alaska town suddenly seemed like it could come true.

I went to Rogers Park Elementary, Goldenview Middle School and South Anchorage High School (go Wolverines!). The excellent education provided there allowed me to win a National Merit Scholarship and with it, a full scholarship to the University of Utah. I maintained my Alaska residence throughout my undergraduate education and was overjoyed to have the opportunity to return to Alaska for medical school after graduating from college. I firmly believe that Alaska has primary education opportunities on par with any other state. It would be a terrible shame to cut the program that motivates so many students to excel and return to Alaska to make their homes.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Elizabeth Conway  
Second year medical student, WWAMI program  
conway.liz@gmail.com  
(801) 915-6314