

**From:** [Brianna Davis](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Support Alaska WWAMI medical education program  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 25, 2015 7:50:11 AM

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Dear Committee Finance,

We, the Medical Directors and Board Members at Tanana Valley Clinic, are writing in support of the WWAMI medical education program.

WWAMI is a collaborative medical school among universities in five NW states. Operating for over 44 years, the program has consistently provided some of the best and brightest Alaskans access to the medical education and training necessary for them to return home and serve their communities, helping to address our state's shortage of physicians. The intent language currently in the House budget will admit the final students in 2016 and eliminate the program by 2019.

The elimination of this program will have long term impacts for Alaska's health care system. Without the program, physician shortages will worsen and recruitment challenges will increase. The result will be an increase in health care costs and a decrease in health care quality as we are no longer able to "grow our own" physicians. Tanana Valley Clinic currently has 7 "Alaska Grown" providers that have returned to practice here in their home community. TVC also has 2 practicing providers from the University of Washington, Seattle's Alaska Track Program, a training program developed for the five-state WWAMI region to train physicians uniquely to the needs of the region, ultimately increasing the number of graduates who eventually practice in the WWAMI region. The WWAMI program is a success and a critical part of the state education and health care infrastructure.

To protect the health of all Alaskans, remove the intent language to eliminate the program from the budget. This program represents one of the most efficient and cost-effective tools Alaska has available to invest in our health delivery system and the health of our people.

Please ensure funding for the WWAMI program continues.

Sincerely,

Kerry Wappett, MD  
Michael Swenson, MD  
Mishelle Nace, MD  
Heather Woller, MD  
Zachary Werle, DO  
Corrine Leistikow, MD

Sincerely,

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