

From: [Marilee Hayden](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Support Alaska WWAMI medical education program
Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2015 10:00:06 AM

Dear Committee Finance,

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 included in the House budget will eliminate the program.

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. 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.

We already have a shortage of physicians. As a nurse I have observed up close the high quality of doctors that they turn out.

You need to realize that the shortage of doctors is getting worse in the lower 48 as well. That decreases any chance of doctors wanting to come up here.

When you are older and on Medicare the ability to find a doctor is much harder since most physicians can only afford to take a limited amount of Medicare patients. So when you are older and have increased medical problems and need a doctor, it will just be too bad.

It may be reasonable to reduce the program for a while but do not delete a program that improves the quality of lives and saves them.

Sincerely,

Marilee Hayden
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