

From: [Beverly McClendon](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Support Alaska WWAMI medical education program
Date: Tuesday, March 24, 2015 8:10:15 AM

Dear Committee Finance,

As a registered nurse and 30 year resident of Fairbanks Alaska I can vouch for the importance of providing continual support to the WWAMI program. Recruitment of health care providers to Alaska is very challenging. This program provides an avenue for Alaskans to become physicians and then return to Alaska to provide decades of health care to our local community.

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.

Sincerely,

Beverly McClendon, MPA, RN-BC
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