

**From:** [Jennifer McNichol](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Support Alaska WWAMI medical education program  
**Date:** Monday, March 23, 2015 5:20:07 PM

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Dear Committee Finance,

I am writing in strong support of WWAMI, the collaborative medical school which provides enormous benefits to our state. I know that you have all received numerous e-mails about this issue; I will attempt to be clear and succinct. Alaska is a difficult state in which to train, hire, and retain qualified physicians. WWAMI addresses all three of these challenges with unparalleled success. There is no cost-effective substitute that I can imagine. The students who are accepted into the WWAMI program are exceptional individuals who provide nothing but benefit to our population. They are also far more likely to stay in Alaska after beginning their careers here. My husband and I moved to Alaska 19 years ago, and we have both practiced in Sitka since then. While we are not WWAMI graduates, we have been privileged to work alongside several of them. They have uniformly been highly qualified and have demonstrated exceptional patient care on multiple levels. They also seem to be far more successful in becoming integral parts of the community than many new providers coming from Outside. This is a tremendous help in retaining them long-term, and retention improves patient care and saves our organization in recruiting efforts and costs.

While there may not be a constitutional mandate to provide medical education, there clearly is an obligation to provide access to medical care. Eliminating this highly effective and efficient program is only short-sighted; this cut would be a classic example of cutting off one's nose to spite one's face! Please ensure funding for the WWAMI program continues.

Thank you for your service to our state, especially in these difficult times.

Sincerely,

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