

From: [Kamala Shaddock](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Support Alaska WWAMI medical education program
Date: Friday, March 20, 2015 4:50:06 PM

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.

I've seen WWAMI in person, as I coordinate the medical student program at SEARHC Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital in Sitka, Alaska. We have seen, year after year, Alaskan students who are pursuing a career as a physician, who come through our program, They are given the opportunity to experience a real taste of the village life, witness and participate in some of the extraordinary health issues that are more prevalent in Alaska Natives than any other population, and in general grow their interest and desire to return to Alaska and serve. WWAMI is a valuable recruitment tool and a way to continue to keep Alaskans returning to Alaska.

Please ensure funding for the WWAMI program continues.

Sincerely,

Kamala Shaddock
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