

From: [Sun So](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Support Alaska WWAMI medical education program
Date: Tuesday, March 24, 2015 8:30:08 AM

Dear Committee Finance,

Hello :)

I am a hopeful medical student and was devastated that the state legislature is planning on cutting the WWAMI program. I was hoping to attend this school and also practice here in the state of Alaska. I am a huge huge advocate of pro bono work and was hoping to later extend my services to the Alaskans that can not afford and are afraid of occurring some of these outrageous prices. Personally, within my family, I have experienced the need for pro bono programs and was sad about how much awareness was in around it in my community. If I knew what I knew then and if there were enough doctors that were willing to do it, I am 200% sure my mother would have lived a better quality of life. My parents constantly avoided the hospitals like the plague. The only time they went in was when they are close to dying. There was this one time when my mother was involved in a serious car accident. I don't know exactly how severe the accident was or what kind of injuries she sustained but it did require her to stay admitted in the hospital. My parents pushed and pushed and eventually forced the doctor to release her because there was no way as a low income family, be able to afford all of these expenses (even with Medicaid at the time). So she came home but for the next few months I had to take care of her and my sisters because she was partially blind and was still in pain. Luckily she regained some of her vision but not like what it used to be before. I am afraid, however, that if I do move out of state for medical school, I most likely won't be moving back to this beautiful state (my home!) until a few decades later. Why? Most likely by then, I would have settled down while practicing/learning and have a family of my own. It would then be too hard to leave the area with the new life I have made. Plus, I would be missing out on all those years of helping the Alaskans in need especially to those families that are going through the same thing that I did when I was younger.

Please, even if it is not for me and my sob story ;) , save the program for the Alaskan that trusted you to do the right thing and speak for them. Alaskans need more doctors that understand and love this state and want to make and finish their lives here.

Below, is what was already filled out but still useful information if you do not know what the WWAMI program is.

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,

Sunny
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