

March 17, 2015

Dear Representatives and Senators:

I would like you to reconsider the decision regarding WWAMI funding. I am a graduate of the WAMI program that preceded the present WWAMI program. I was born and raised in Fairbanks and returned to Fairbanks in 1981 to practice medicine. I have been in practice over 33 years. My son and daughter-in-law are also WWAMI graduates and intend to return to the state in 2016, after they have finished their residencies. My daughter is also presently in medicine and hopes to return to Alaska for residency this summer.

I truly believe in "grow your own." The best way to assure a secure medical force in the state requires that we educate our own children in the medical field and encourage them to return to their home state. The statistics show that people who come from a rural area are more likely to practice in a rural area. Doctors also often stay in the state they do their residency. We need medical professionals throughout our state. It behooves us to encourage students to return to their home town or at least their state.

The WWAMI program has been an affordable way to obtain a medical education. There are several rotations in the state of Alaska that a student can choose to attend. This is an opportunity for them to meet local providers and determine if they would like to practice in that town in the future. The University of Washington is one of the top primary care educators in the nation. Primary care providers are the basis of the Patient Centered Medical Home that is being promoted nationally.

Please feel free to call or email me if you have any questions. I would love to tell you about the great education I received through the University of Washington Medical School.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jean Tsigonis".

Jean Tsigonis, MD

907-322-9909

jeantsig@hotmail.com

jean.tsigonis@bannerhealth.com