

From: [Liza Walshe](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Support Alaska WWAMI medical education program
Date: Tuesday, March 24, 2015 10:20:08 AM

Dear Committee Finance,

Dear Sirs/Madams,

I'm sure you have read the enclosed letter. Let me elaborate.

I am a Forensic Nurse Examiner at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital. That means I'm a Registered Nurse with specialized training in the care, treatment and diagnosis of men, women, and children who have been victims of crime. Yep, I see people who have been raped, physically abused and assaulted, sexually abused and assaulted, and neglected. That includes the Elders and children of Alaska, our most vulnerable people.

I see patients from not only Fairbanks, but the Interior of Alaska, as well as south and north of Fairbanks.

By getting rid of WWAMI, these patients of ours, would have a significant delay in health care. There is already a delay when a raped person has to wait for a plane, which may be delayed by bad weather, and they are possibly in pain, bleeding, and in a state of psychological shock and horror at what has happened to them. This not only affects the patient, but their family, friends, coworkers. There would be a significant delay in treating, and a delay in physical as well as psychological healing for our people.

This is not only our acute patients, but also follow up care- seeing a physician for physical healing, follow up testing for sexually transmitted infections the patient may have been exposed to, and counseling for the patient and family. In my opinion you are making a grave error in the health and wellbeing of our people, if you get rid of WWAMI.

Thank you for reading.

I remain, respectfully yours,

Liza Walshe, RN FNE

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,

Liza Walshe, RN FNE SANE-A/P
PO Box 58585
Fairbanks, AK 99711