

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

To: Members, Joint Appropriations Interim Committee and Joint Labor, Health and Social Services Interim Committee

From: Myron Allen, UW Provost; Joe Steiner, Dean, College of Health Sciences; Gerald Saunders, Director/Clinical Professor; Don Richards, Director for Governmental and Community Affairs; and Matthew McEchron, Director, UW WWAMI program

Subject: WWAMI Medical Education update and WWAMI Expansion

Date: Monday, June 21, 2010

This report is the University of Wyoming's response pursuant to 2010 Laws, Chapter 39, Section 2-167, footnote #1. The footnote mandates that the university "enter into negotiations with the University of Washington School of Medicine (UWSOM) to increase the number of seats annually from the fiscal year 2010 level of sixteen (16) to eighteen (18) and ultimately twenty (20) students for each class year of medical students under W.S. 21-17-109."

Included below are (1) the results of these negotiations with UWSOM, (2) a status review of the WWAMI program, (3) a discussion of trends in the applicant pool and the case for expansion, and (4) related issues for future consideration. Consultations have been solicited from other stakeholders including the Wyoming Medical Society (WMS). Further, the Wyoming Hospital Association and WMS submitted letters of support for expansion.

Section 1: UWSOM's response to UW's request to expand the WWAMI program.

UWSOM supports increasing the number of Wyoming-supported WWAMI seats from 16 to 18 and then 20 over the next two fiscal years. A formal letter of support is attached. Although the letter is supportive, it appears to place the expansion in the context of a larger curriculum review that UWSOM will undertake after receiving its accreditation review later this summer. As a result, UW will forward you the definitive results of that review as soon as they are made available.

Section 2: WWAMI as Wyoming's Medical School.

Since 1997 Wyoming has participated in the Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, Idaho (WWAMI) medical program. The following statistics summarize the status of Wyoming's participation in WWAMI:

- Since inception 147 WWAMI students from Wyoming have enrolled in medical studies. (1997-2009). One student failed.
- 98 Wyoming students have graduated from UWSOM as of June 2010. Out of that number, 41 have completed residency training.
- 29 of the 41 who have completed their residency training have returned to Wyoming to practice. This represents a 70 percent return rate. Although the numbers for 2010 are incomplete, UW officials know of five additional WWAMI graduates who are returning to Wyoming this summer.

These data compare very favorably with return rates that characterized Wyoming's prior contract programs (Creighton and Utah) at 40 percent and the far lower numbers that, historically, have characterized the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE), which carries no contract, at less than 25 percent.

Section 3: Trends in the applicant pool and the case for expansion

The applicant pool: interviews and admissions. Each year applicants to WWAMI have to be certified as Wyoming residents. Those certified students apply to UWSOM, and each application is screened by at least two UWSOM admissions committee physicians for interview suitability. Those students approved for interviews are evaluated by a team of two Wyoming admissions committee physicians and one UWSOM physician. At the end of the interview process, the UWSOM executive committee meets with their Wyoming counterparts to develop a list of accepted and alternate students. The Wyoming admissions committee has one member and one vote on the executive committee.

Historically about 50 Wyoming students apply annually for entrance into the WWAMI program. About 40 students each year are granted interviews. While the number of applicants has not greatly increased, the depth of the applicant pool has expanded in recent years. For example, in E2007 (enrollment year 2007) 16 positions were offered, but no alternates were allowed. Five students elected to matriculate elsewhere leaving a class size of 11. In the year immediately preceding, 2 alternates were allowed, and both were admitted after other students elected not to accept a WWAMI slot. In the last three years (E2008, E2009 and E2010) between 35 and 40 Wyoming students have been interviewed, but the number of qualified applicants has risen considerably. In both E2008 and E2009, Wyoming had five on the alternate list, and all entered medical school somewhere. In E2010, Wyoming interviewed 37 students, offered program admission to 15 students (one deferral from the prior year) and has an alternate list of 11 students with virtually no difference in qualifications between accepted student #16 and alternate #11.

The significance of this history is that for three consecutive years Wyoming has had well qualified applicants in excess of the 16 allotted slots. At the same time, because of budget cuts, Wyoming's funding of the WICHE program for medical education has been eliminated for the 2011-12 biennium. Under the WICHE program between two and four students are commonly admitted for study at other regional medical schools where the student pays resident tuition, and

the State of Wyoming pays a fee which is close to the difference between resident and nonresident tuition.

The case for expansion. As described above, under the current trend the number of qualified Wyoming residents exceeds the number of currently available WWAMI slots. This trend has profound implications for medical manpower needs in the State.

UW currently has the teaching, resource, and facility capacity to expand the WWAMI class by up to four students. Both the WWAMI classroom and the anatomy laboratory can accommodate 20 students without compromising the quality of education. There will be no impact on instruction whether the class expands incrementally, or directly, to 20. For the first year of the expansion, there would be no additional expenditure of funds to UWSOM, as the tuition support Wyoming pays is limited to years two, three, and four of the MD program for each cohort.

The quality and depth of the applicant pool over the last three years support an expansion of the 2011 Wyoming WWAMI class to 18 or 20 students. In discussions between University of Wyoming administrators, Wyoming WWAMI faculty, and Administrators at UWSOM there is uniform support for Wyoming WWAMI class expansion, culminating in the attached letter.

Section 4: Related issues.

There are three related issues associated with the future costs of expansion, the support budgets needed, and eligibility questions.

First, while there will be no additional costs for expanding the number of Wyoming WWAMI slots from 16 to 18 in FY12, there will be additional funding needs in FY 13 and beyond to fully populate this program to 18 and then 20 students. Table 1 illustrates the increased costs anticipated as the number of students increases to 18 students in FY12 and subsequently 20 students in FY13.

Table 1. Estimated future costs resulting from additional Wyoming WWAMI slots.

	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16
New students in all cohorts	2	6	10	14	16
Additional cost	\$0	\$140,000	\$433,000	\$743,000	\$1,071,000

(The above analysis assumes \$70,000/year in tuition payments to UWSOM, beginning for the first two students in FY13. Consistent with current economic trends, the table assumes that tuition at UWSOM will increase at a compounded rate of three percent per year.)

Second, in the FY2013-14 biennium, UW will need approximately \$10,000 per year in additional support costs, primarily for additional laboratory expenses, including the cost of an additional cadaver per year and other supplies, associated with four additional students.

Third and finally, the Legislature may wish to consider whether statutory changes to the residency requirements for the candidates would be appropriate, if and only if there are

insufficient Wyoming residents to fill all of the allotted seats in every given year. For example, in the event that an insufficient number of Wyoming residents qualify for the full 20 slots in some future year, perhaps UW and UWSOM could consider non-resident graduates of UW, assuming the same contractual repayment provisions and service to Wyoming. This arrangement would open the program up to out-of-state resident students who have demonstrated an interest in Wyoming by (1) having attended the University of Wyoming for a sufficient portion of their baccalaureate program and (2) having obtained their undergraduate degree in the state. It would provide additional security that Wyoming would be able fully to use all of the state's allotted slots each year, and it would serve to increase the state's physician workforce, a fundamental principle of the WWAMI program.

Enc (2)

c: Bill Mai, Legislative Service Office
Jerry Laska, Legislative Service Office
Sheila Bush, Wyoming Medical Society
Dan Perdue, Wyoming Hospital Association

UW Medicine

June 2010

Tom Buchanan, Ph.D.
President
University of Wyoming
1000 E. University Ave, Dept. 3434
Laramie, Wyoming 82071


Dear ~~President~~ Buchanan,

The University of Washington School of Medicine WWAMI program has enjoyed a 14-year history of providing high-quality, cost-effective medical education for the State of Wyoming. Dr. Matthew McEchron, director of the first-year program, and Dr. Richard Hillman, assistant clinical dean, provide oversight for the Wyoming WWAMI program through the University of Wyoming, with the help of the Wyoming Medical Society.

The University of Washington School of Medicine recently had its Liaison Committee on Medical Education accreditation site visit; the School will receive the report from this site visit later this summer. I anticipate asking for a review of the medical education curriculum after receiving the report. I am supportive of exploring the University of Wyoming WWAMI program expanding from the current 16 students to 20 students as part of this larger curriculum review.

I look forward to continuing the partnership with the University of Wyoming WWAMI program. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Paul G. Ramsey, M.D.
CEO, UW Medicine
Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs and
Dean of the School of Medicine,
University of Washington

PGR:jam

cc: Gerald Saunders, M.D.

Paul G. Ramsey, M.D.



**Wyoming
Hospital
Association**

May 3, 2010

Walter Gerald Saunders, MD
Director
Medical Education and Public Health
1000 E. University Avenue
Dept. 4238
Laramie, WY 82071

Dear Dr. Saunders:

On behalf of the membership of the Wyoming Hospital Association, I am pleased to offer this letter of endorsement for the WWAMI Medical Education Program.

Our organization has had a long-standing relationship with the WWAMI program since the Wyoming Legislature passed the enabling legislation to join the program in 1996. Legislative leaders recognized the importance of aligning ourselves with one of the top ranked medical schools in the country.

The medical training received by Wyoming students has enabled the majority of them to return to our state to address many of our healthcare workforce shortages. Our hospitals have benefitted greatly from the medical education contract program offered through WWAMI.

I look forward to a continued successful relationship between our two organizations.

Sincerely,

Dan Perdue
President

DP/rf