



Alaska State Legislature

Senate Republican Minority

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Sponsor: Senator Gary Wilken
Contact: Sheila Peterson, 465-3709
Bill Version: SB 32

Fact Sheet for: Senate Bill 32

Short Title: WWAMI/NURSE EDUCATION LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

Summary:

- Increases the number of students eligible to participate in the Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana and Idaho (WWAMI) medical education program from 10 students to 20 students.
- Establishes a loan reimbursement program for registered nurses and doctors who are trained outside the WWAMI program.

Benefits:

- Allows an additional ten students to enroll each year in the WWAMI medical education program, which is based at the University of Washington.
- Provides a financial incentive for registered nurses and medical doctors to practice in Alaska.
- Helps ensure a stable medical workforce in Alaska, even in under-served areas of the state.

Background:

- The Alaska Physician Supply Task Force was commissioned in January 2006 by the President of the University of Alaska and the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Social Services to address the future needs for physicians in Alaska and determine what strategies could be used to meet the identified needs.

Alaska has a shortage of physicians and other medical personnel. The Task Force estimates that Alaska has a shortage of 375 physicians and needs to add a net of 59 physicians per year, starting immediately.

Alaska currently ranks 46th among US states in terms of the number of state-supported medical school positions. The Task Force recommends increasing the WWAMI positions to 20 per year, then potentially to 30 per year over a period of several years.