

WWAMI: Helping meet the physician workforce needs in a 5 state region
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CONTEXT: WWAMI is an enduring partnership of the University of Washington School of Medicine and the states of Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana and Idaho.

OBJECTIVE: To share the WWAMI experience in helping to address physician workforce needs across a region.

DESIGN, SETTING AND PATIENTS: WWAMI was founded with five goals in 1971. These goals are: 1) provide access for citizens of the Northwest to publicly supported medical education; 2) increase number of primary care physicians and address maldistribution of physicians; 3) create community-based medical education; 4) expand graduate medical education and continuing medical education; and 5) avoid excessive capital costs and duplication of resources by using existing educational infrastructure.

MAIN OUTCOMES MEASURES: The main outcomes measures are: 1) number of medical students participating in publically supported medical education; 2) amount of community based medical education in the WWAMI region; 3) number of medical students returning to practice in the WWAMI region; 4) number of GME programs in the WWAMI region; 5) number of residents staying in WWAMI region to practice; and 6) number of physicians in the WWAMI region.

RESULTS: WWAMI has increased the number of medical students who attended publically supported medical education, increased the number of residency programs in the region, increased the number of primary care physicians in the region, maintained above national average return rates for medical students and residents and accomplished all of this in a cost effective manner.

CONCLUSIONS: WWAMI is an excellent example of a regional medical education program that can help address physician workforce needs.