**Montana Legislature Education and Local Government Interim Committee**

**January 14, 2016**

**Update on Montana WWAMI and the UW School of Medicine**

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**WWAMI and the UW School of Medicine**

WWAMI is a five-state medical education partnership between the University of Washington School of Medicine (UWSOM) and the states of Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana and Idaho which began in 1971. The UWSOM is ranked # 1 for Rural Medicine, Primary Care and Family Medicine. In 2015, 60% of the School’s graduates entered primary care residencies.

**Montana WWAMI**

Currently, 30 Montana students begin their medical education in the WWAMI program each year. Montana WWAMI students spend their first 18 months at Montana State University for the Foundations Phase of basic science education and then complete their clinical clerkships in Montana and throughout the WWAMI region for the remainder of their medical education. Montana has over 40 required clerkships in -17 different communities involving over 350 clinical faculty. More than 140 WWAMI medical students from all five states participated in at least one clerkship in Montana this past year.

The Montana WWAMI Targeted Rural Underserved Track (TRUST) program began in 2008 with the ultimate goal of creating a rural/underserved physician workforce in Montana. The TRUST program involves a targeted admissions process and links students with a rural/underserved preceptor and continuity community that culminates in a 5-6 month learning experience in that community during the third year. Ten of the 30 Montana WWAMI students each year are enrolled in TRUST.

**Financial Support and Return on Investment** 638 Montana residents have graduated from WWAMI: 40% of Montana graduates returned to Montana to practice; 56% of graduates from all WWAMI states chose to practice in Montana (total return on investment). The national average of return for medical students is 38.7%g

* For FY 16 the Montana state appropriation for WWAMI is $4,124,480
* 60% of state appropriations for WWAMI are spent in Montana
* A 2010 study showed that for every dollar spent on WWAMI the economic return is $5.14
* The cost per capita for medical education in MT is $4.91, in ND it is $37.11 and in SD it is $25.95
* The cost per student for medical education in MT $33,039 in ND it is $87,958 and in SD it is $79,075.
* The Montana Rural Physician Incentive Program is a loan repayment program funded by a fee paid by WWAMI students of $5,131 per year to support a program that offers up to $100,000 of loan repayment over five years for physicians practicing in rural/underserved settings in Montana.

**Key Questions for the Future of Medical Education in Montana**

* Do we have adequate physician workforce data? What are our goals based on the best available data?
* How can we best meet those goals, attending to the *entire* medical education continuum — pipeline through residency training?
* How do we improve STEM efforts in K-12 education to grow the pipeline?
* How do we implement a scalable increase in medical student education?
* How do we increase the number of residency positions in the most impactful manner?
* How can we assist rural/underserved Montana in recruiting and retaining physicians beyond simply increasing the physician supply?
* How can we improve the diversity in our physician workforce especially for our Native American populations?