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GENERAL NEWS

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WAMI A BETTER SOLUTION THAN AN IN-STATE MEDICAL SCHOOL, WAMI STUDENT SAYS

MOSCOW --- "There are people seriously considering building a medical school in Idaho but, as far as I'm concerned, the WAMI medical program is a better way to educate doctors for Idaho," a WAMI student said in a recent interview.

Allen Fruedenthal, Pocatello, added, "There is no place in Idaho where you could reasonably build a medical school because there is no population center large enough to provide medical students with the necessary variety of diseases. In addition, Idaho does not have the money."

Fruedenthal is one of nine University of Washington medical students taking the first semester of basic science courses at the University of Idaho under the WAMI program. The UW School of Medicine, the only one in Washington, Alaska, Montana and Idaho (WAMI), administers the federally funded program which is aimed at increasing the number of rural doctors in the Northwest.

During the semester, each student has worked with a Moscow area doctor in a preceptor program, observing both office calls and surgery when the patients gave permission.

Fruedenthal's preceptor, Dr. William P. Marineau, said, "With the tax structure the way it is, it's impossible for Idaho to build a medical school. Idaho's whole education budget wouldn't pay for a medical school."

Marineau added that he has always thought the concept of a cooperative program between the states was a good one and feels it has worked well this semester. He said, "The students have made useful contacts while here at the university. I've told Al he's welcome to come back to observe any time as he progresses through school."

POCATELLO Fruedenthal, son of Mr. and Mrs. Emil Fruedenthal, Pocatello,
SANDPOINT is a graduate of Sandpoint High School and of Whitman College,
WALLA WALLA, WASH. Walla Walla, Wash.

Another WAMI student, Patrick Daley, Homedale, helped organize the Community
HOMEDALE Clinics, Inc., in Idaho's Owyhee County. Prior to their estab-
lishment, there were no doctors or public health care in the county, Daley said.
Earlier in the fall, all nine WAMI students visited the clinics.

Daley noted that he got into the WAMI program because of his interest in non-urban

health care but said he would like to see urban medical care before deciding where to go into practice.

A graduate of Pomona College, Claremont, and of San Diego State College, Daley worked with Dr. Edward Boas. Boas stressed that the preceptor portion of the program is very important because it allows prospective doctors to get a good exposure to medicine before going any further in school. He said that every medical student should have such an opportunity, either prior to medical school or during the first year.

Another student in the program is from a small Idaho town without a doctor. "The POLLOCK closest doctor to Pollock is 35 miles away in either Grangeville, McCall or Council, but that isn't as bad as it sounds. We have good roads without much traffic. In a suburban area, it might take as much time to reach a doctor because of traffic jams," Francis Spain said. Spain, son of Mr. and Mrs. Kirk Spain, is a graduate of Salmon River High School and the University of Idaho.

Spain worked with Dr. John M. Ayers who noted that while WAMI is still an experiment, it should prove to be a good thing for Idaho because it will get more Idahoans into medical school and into practice in the state.

Another student from a small town is Richard D. Lewis, Dayton, Wash. Lewis said the preceptor program has been very educational for him, allowing him to see what family practice is, what a doctor does in an average day and how a doctor builds rapport with patients. He also said the WAMI students have carried five to seven credits more than the first year medical students at the University of Washington so they haven't had as much time to work with the preceptors as they might have wished.

Lewis worked with Dr. R.D. Brooks who stressed that family practice is in itself a specialty just like pediatrics or gynecology, and that WAMI gives medical students an opportunity to see this specialty in practice.

Brooks also said he is concerned about the proposal to shorten the length of medical school education in order to teach more doctors and thus meet the doctor shortage. "There is only so much learning a human being can absorb at one time," he said.

Brooks added that he feels the doctor shortage is not as great as the public has been led to believe. Redistribution would solve much of the problem, he said.

Redistributing doctors, especially into rural areas, is the primary goal of the WAMI program.

DAYTON, WASH. Lewis, son of Mr. and Mrs. Bert Lewis, is a graduate of Dayton (Wash.) High School and of the University of Idaho.

WAMI

EDMONDS, WASH. An Edmonds, Wash., student, Steven W. Johnson, noted that participating in WAMI has helped cement his ideas of entering general practice in a small town. He also said he found the preceptor program, usually available only to third and fourth year medical students, to be very useful. "I could see how material we were covering in our courses would be pertinent later," Johnson said.

His preceptor, Dr. Rodger Hawkins, noted that he had aimed to show Steve the advantages of general practice in a small community. "I know most of the patients that I see so I really enjoy my practice. It's different if you are a specialist," he said.

Hawkins, like many of the doctors, noted that having a student observer had been a good experience for him. "In order to explain why I've made a certain diagnosis, for example, I have to sit down and think out routine decisions."

He noted, however, that there is a communication gap between a first semester medical student and a doctor and he recommends having the preceptorship during the second semester of the first year.

WAMI currently sends first semester students to Alaska and Idaho and will include Montana next year. Eventually the program will be expanded to more than one semester.

EDMONDS, WASH. Johnson, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Milton O. Johnson, is a graduate of Edmonds High School and the University of Washington.

The University of Idaho was selected as the Idaho institution to participate in the experimental program. Idaho coordinator is Dr. Guy R. Anderson, professor of bacteriology.