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# GENERAL NEWS

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## IDAHO A PACE SETTER IN WAMI PROGRAM

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MOSCOW -- Idaho was the first state to fund the non-experimental phase of the WAMI regional medical program, according to program director Dr. M. Roy Schwarz.

AMERICAN FALLS Schwarz, a native of American Falls, Idaho, said Idaho has been a pace setter in the program, appropriating \$256,700 for fiscal year 1976. "Idaho Gov. Cecil Andrus signed the bill allocating funds for Idaho's participation into law on March 19," he said, noting that Montana and Alaska followed later in the spring in establishing the program on a permanent basis.

"Taking the step from the experimental to the permanent phase of the program represents a major landmark in the educational history of Idaho and of medical education in the West," said Schwarz, one of the innovators of WAMI, the Washington, Alaska, Montana, Idaho regional medical education program. WAMI was started in 1971.

"I am absolutely certain that my experience of growing up in a small rural town has affected me and my judgment of various components of the WAMI experiment," said Schwarz, who noted that his mother, grandmother, brother and cousins still live in American Falls.

"All I have to do is look at my own hometown--which recently lost one of its two doctors--for an example of the importance of WAMI," he said. WAMI provides openings in the University of Washington medical school, the only one in the four states, to Idaho, Alaska and Montana students and also encourages the participants to consider family practice in rural areas of the four states.

"It has been exciting to me to be part of an effort to bring medical education to Idaho on a firm basis," said Schwarz, who was active in athletics and student government while in high school and today is one of the youngest deans in the history of the UW medical school. He became an associate dean in 1970.

Schwarz worked on development of the university phase, in Idaho located at the University of Idaho, as well as on use of satellite transmissions between the medical school and students and doctors at outlying WAMI sites in Alaska and Washington.

"Dr. August Swanson, now of the Association of American Medical Colleges, developed the community phase and Dr. John Lein, a University of Idaho graduate and associate dean for continuing education at the UW medical school, developed the continuing education phase," he said.

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WAMI PROGRAM

Asked if they would try it again, Schwarz said, "Emphatically yes, but perhaps on a less grandiose level. Maybe we would have added one state at a time, rather than trying to wrestle with three state legislatures and three state medical societies all at once," Schwarz said.

"We are very appreciative of the efforts of many individuals in each state, from the governors on down, in bringing WAMI to this stage. People in the east tell us this is miraculous that four states can work together. They say the project should have bogged down somewhere, but it didn't," Schwarz said.

As WAMI moves into the permanent stage, the program is expanding from 10 to 20 students and one to two semesters at each of the participating universities.

"It's a big step going to a full year, and a bigger step to have the accrediting review team here in October," said Dr. Guy Anderson, WAMI coordinator at the University of Idaho. The review is made by the American Medical Association and the American Association of Medical Colleges.

Anderson said there will be no major changes in the preceptor program in which WAMI students have spent time observing the office routine and practice of area doctors.

"With the additional students, however, we will have to rely on additional doctors from the outlying areas," he said, noting the students will continue to be exposed to various aspects of rural medical practice through field trips throughout Idaho.

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