Alaska Pharmacy Education Strategy Planning Update

September 22, 2010
Information for SAC
Summary

• Comprehensive assessment by national expert – final report February 2010

• Options identified:
  • Option 1 - Provide coordination in exchange for “Alaska seats” in established distance pharmacy school (Creighton University)
  • Option 2 - Establish robust satellite partnership with pharmacy school for in-Alaska education, preferably with multiple sites
  • Option 3 – Develop a multi-state partnership (similar to WWAMI but with all years in state)
  • Option 4 - Establish a pharmacy school
    • Consultant recommended a maximum of 30 admissions per year, not independently sustainable; current student demand averages 7 Alaskans per year admitted to pharmacy schools
    • Cost: Start-up, first five years: $11 million operating (plus $7.5 million tuition), $12 million capital; ongoing about $3 million per year shortfall
      [WWAMI ~$4.6 million for 30 admits]
Committee Recommendation

- Criteria
  - Accredited, high quality pharmacy education in Alaska
  - Primary goal: produce clinical pharmacists for Alaska to alleviate current and projected shortages
  - Focus on providing an admission opportunity for Alaskans
  - Consider industry and student demand, available resources, alternate needs (e.g. Physician Task Force – need 150 more physicians per year; DOLWD – need 15 more pharmacists per year)
  - Provide opportunities for UA faculty and Alaska pharmacists to participate in education

- Pharmacy Education Committee recommendation
  - Pursue Option 2 - Robust Partnership as Satellite
  - Also pursue Option 1 - Creighton Distance Program as interim measure

- Pharmacists’ Association is supportive of this approach, which is also included in the industry-led 2010 Alaska Health Workforce Plan
Demand for Clinical Pharmacists

- 2007 vacancy survey* - 98 estimated vacancies (23.7% vacancy rate).
- 2009 vacancy survey** - 37 estimated vacancies (8.6% vacancy rate)
  - Study respondents included 36 pharmacies/pharmacy chains, 22 hospitals/nursing homes, and 29 tribal health organizations - 92% of all such organizations; respondents represented 415 positions (88% of the 471 pharmacist licensees in the state)
  - The overall 2009 vacancy rate masked an urban/rural difference of 5.0% (urban 7.4%, rural 12.4%)
  - HRSA recommends no more than 3-5% vacancy rate
- DHSS Licensee Study - 50 more licensees in the state in 2009 than in 2007, a total of 471 individuals (a 12% increase)
- DOLWD - 34% over age 50

*Alaska Center for Rural Health/Alaska’s AHEC and ** ACRH/AHEC with Institute for Social and Economic Research
Projected True Workforce Need

- Difficult to benchmark – national average 68 pharmacists/100,000 and Alaska 51/100,000 – but is national average a useful benchmark for projection purposes?
- DOLWD projected a need for a total of 150 pharmacists in 2006-2016 period (added 50 between 2007 and 2009)
- Dr. Nelson projects a coming need for 500-550 pharmacists in Alaska with anticipated expansion of role, or 29-79 more than current licensees
- Recruitment may grow more difficult when recession eases in Lower 48, though newly opened pharmacy schools are producing more graduates than formerly
Initial members of the University of Alaska Pharmacy Education Committee were as follows:

- John Blake, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Director, Office of Research Integrity, UAF
- Sandra Carroll-Cobb, Interim Dean, Community and Technical College, UAA*
- Larry Duffy, Interim Dean, Graduate School, UAF
- Cheryl Easley, Dean, College of Health and Social Welfare, UAA
- Paul Layer, Dean, College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, UAF
- Jim Liszka, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, UAA
- Karen Perdue, Associate Vice President for Health Programs, UA
- Karen Schmitt, Dean, Career Education, UAS**
- Jan Harris, Vice Provost, Health Programs, UAA – Project PI/ Facilitator

*Current: Karen Schmitt   **Current: Steve Krause
Charge to Committee

- Oversee work of the Pharmacy Education Consultant
- Review consultant’s report and recommendations
- Confer with other stakeholders such as the Alaska Pharmacists’ Association and the healthcare industry
- Make recommendations to the Vice President for Academic Affairs regarding a pharmacy education strategy for Alaska
Question

- Is SAC in agreement with moving forward with the Pharmacy Education Committee recommendation?
  - MOA with Creighton University
  - Seek partner for satellite program
Background
Consultant Report

- Dr. Arthur Nelson, Pharmacy Education Consultant and Dean of the School of Pharmacy at Texas Tech University
- *Needs Assessment and Analysis of Potential Strategies for a Pharmacy Educational Program for Alaska* – Final Report February 2010
- UA Pharmacy Education Committee has reviewed this report and provided recommendations to the Vice President of Academic Affairs
Report Contents

- Comprehensive analysis of the status of and prospects for pharmacy education in Alaska
  - Pre-Pharmacy Education
  - Pharmacy Education Options
    - Institutional partnerships for pharmacy education
      1. Host established distance pharmacy program
      2. Engage an out-of-state pharmacy school system in a robust, interactive partnership, with satellite sites in Alaska
      3. Participate in a multi-state health professional consortium with an integral Alaska hub
    - In-state school
      4. Develop an Alaska pharmacy school
Pre-Pharmacy

- Pharmacy schools vary considerably in their pre-requisite requirements
- Most courses seem to be available at UAA, UAF and UAS
- Missing upper level anatomy/physiology course at all MAUs but content is available
- Will need to formalize missing pre-requisite courses
- Advising materials are being developed aimed primarily at WICHE schools and Creighton
Option 1

- **Host established distance pharmacy program**
  - Establish agreement with Creighton University to set aside “Alaska seats” (5 to start) in their fully distance delivered pharmacy program

- **Benefits**
  - Already fully functional (with 3-4 Alaskans enrolled)
  - Flexibility in numbers of students enrolling and in their locations within the state
  - Can occur while also developing other options
  - Minimal requirements for State of Alaska resources
  - Applicants competing for only the available Alaska seats and not in the larger pool (unless Alaska seats full; could also compete nationally)
  - Alaska pharmacists/pharmacies could participate as clinical mentors and rotation sites, and have an opportunity to recruit graduates
Option 1, continued

- Disadvantages
  - Best suited for more mature students though UA assistance/coordination would make this less of an issue
  - Fairly expensive program, offset by not needing to move out of state
  - Limited opportunities for the participation of University of Alaska faculty and researchers
  - Unlikely that potential of synergies with other health professions students would be realized
  - Minimal contribution to the development of University of Alaska; benefit mostly accrues to Alaskans wanting access
Option 2

- Engage an out-of-state pharmacy school system in a robust, interactive partnership with satellite sites in Alaska
  - Many pharmacy schools in the country have several campus locations; are distance delivering within their own systems
  - Use an RFP approach to achieve best design for Alaska – looking for distance delivery to Alaska, all education in state

- Benefits
  - Significant participation by Alaska faculty, pharmacists, and pharmacies
  - Possible program satellite sites at the main UA campuses
  - Achieve synergies with other health professional students in Alaska
Option 2, continued

- Disadvantages
  - Alaska resources would be needed; amount depends on nature of partnership
  - An RFP would need to be carefully developed and managed
  - Identifying and implementing the partnership would take some development time, including identifying needed finances, local staff and faculty, and other resources
  - Depth of participation of Alaska faculty and institutions would depend on negotiations with the partners
  - The size of local cohorts during the first three years would be contingent on clinical opportunities in each community; Dr. Nelson stated that all students would need to accomplish their fourth year clinical rotations in Anchorage
Option 3

- **Participate in a multi-state health professional consortium with an integral Alaska hub** (similar to WWAMI model)
  - There is an opportunity developing to work with other western states to form a multi-state educational consortium to offer pharmacy education
  - This is just in the beginning discussion stages
  - UA would participate as a member of the consortium

- **Advantages**
  - Significant participation by Alaska faculty, pharmacists, and pharmacies
  - Possible program satellite sites at the main UA campuses
  - Achieve synergies with other health professional students in Alaska
  - Would have a say in the design of the structure and ongoing operations of the model – distance delivery to Alaska would be required
Option 3, continued

- Disadvantages
  - A commitment of Alaska resources would be required
  - There would need to be favorable terms negotiated with the delivering school of pharmacy to maximize opportunities for Alaskans
  - Will take some time to develop consortium; this may ultimately not come about
Option 4

- **Develop an Alaska pharmacy school**
  - According to Dr. Nelson Alaska could develop and academically sustain a stand-alone pharmacy school
  - Proposed a thirty-person admission cohort that would be the smallest pharmacy school in the nation
  - Students could take early coursework in Fairbanks, Anchorage or Juneau; the final year of multiple clinical rotations would have to be spent in Anchorage
  - The available clinical experiences in each community would need to be considered in identifying the number of students in attendance at each site
  - Accreditation requires that the PharmD clinical program be established first; if a PhD program in pharmacology research is desired, it must be added after PharmD accreditation requirements are met
Option 4, continued

- **Benefits**
  - A school could be designed to best fit Alaska’s needs for clinical pharmacists with attention to distribution in the state
  - Could encourage the widest participation of current University of Alaska faculty, researchers, and health students, as well as the state’s practitioners

- **Disadvantages**
  - Upfront and ongoing costs of the school would be major
    - Estimated at $18.5 million operating first five years, offset with $7.5 in tuition; would need $11 million in first five years
    - Would also require about $12 million in initial capital expenditures
    - A school would not be self-sustaining; would require a State investment of nearly $3 million per year into the future
Option 4, continued

- Disadvantages, continued
  - Timeframe longest, estimated at about 7-10 years
  - Alaska student numbers
    - Currently fewer than ten Alaska students per year admitted to pharmacy schools in the country (average 7 and has not been increasing)
    - May increase with an in-state option
    - But achieving enrollments of thirty per year may be difficult without importing students from outside the state
    - State policy makers, including the Board of Regents and the Legislature, have emphasized academic investments to meet state workforce needs and the educational needs of its residents and have not heretofore been enthusiastic about establishing programs requiring non-Alaskans to enroll to fill class rosters or graduates to seek work outside the state
  - With 37 vacancies, one graduation cohort of 30 would nearly fill the need
Option 4, continued

- Disadvantages, continued
  - Faculty
    - Securing sufficient faculty is increasingly difficult and salary requirements are high
    - Whatever option is ultimately chosen for Alaska, contracting for specialty faculty may be necessary
Recommended Direction

- After reviewing the consultant’s report and receiving and considering input from interested parties, including the Alaska Pharmacists’ Association, the UA Pharmacy Education Committee has recommended **Option 2**, seeking a robust partnership with an existing pharmacy school.
- Simultaneously UAA will enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with Creighton University to provide in-state coordination for Alaska students interested in pursuing their distance delivered program.
- Pharmacy workforce trends will continue to be tracked and analyzed annually, and criteria identified to assess the need to modify or expand selected options, up to and including consideration of a pharmacy school.
- In the end, there must be a balance struck between demand, resources, and competing development needs.
Questions for Consideration

- Does the Pharmacy Education Committee’s recommendation appear reasonable at this time?
- Should we solicit interest and proposals from the most likely pharmacy school partners?
- Should we continue to consider pharmacy school development some time in the future, perhaps developing a pathway and timeframe toward that goal?
- Alternatively, do the total number of Alaska pharmacist positions, fluctuations in vacancies, and potentially low student demand suggest that a partnership would be preferable and an adequate goal for the foreseeable future?
- Considering the data regarding the demand for clinical pharmacists and all possible alternative health program initiatives, should pharmacy be considered as a top UA priority for investment?