

Transforming care in the community

Annual Report 2024



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
Elson S. Floyd
College of Medicine



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Letter from the Dean

Transforming Care in the Community

“Saxifrage is my flower that splits the rocks.

— William Carlos Williams

The past year has been an exciting time at the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine as we work to transform the health of our community through innovative care, education, and research.

Much like the mountain-dwelling saxifrage plant that develops deep and powerful roots that can break through stone, we—as Washington’s community-based medical school—keep our roots in the community to break down barriers to its individual and collective health.

The stories gathered here represent the enterprising work led by faculty, staff, and students to serve Washington and beyond and pursue a healthy, equitable future for all. They are a small sample of what we do every day to split the rocks and reshape our health care landscape.

See how we collaboratively addressed gaps in care through Spokane’s Autism and Neurodevelopmental Clinic and expanded speech-language pathology services to Tri-Cities-area children ready to find their voice.

Learn how we expanded access to care and attracted top doctors to Washington through our residency programs, reaching several milestones as we welcomed our first pediatric residents and graduated our first class of internal medical residents.

Enjoy our students’ dedication through their work in the Health Equity Circle to support a connected framework for health in our community’s most vulnerable members.



Celebrate the college's new community collaborations with the launch of the Partnership for Health Innovation and plans to improve education and health outcomes in Pierce County.

This has been an extraordinary year of success for our academic programs. We saw 100% job placement or continued education in our Master of Science Coordinated Program in Dietetics, Nutrition, and Exercise Physiology within 12 months after graduation. Our Speech and Hearing Sciences students achieved a new milestone: a 95% job placement rate for the class of 2024 within one month after graduation. We also reached new heights in our MD program, with 100% residency attainment for our alumni now in competitive residency programs nationwide and with a majority in the Northwest. We are training the health care leaders of the future.

Our outstanding researchers continue to make advances that create life-changing, community-informed research and advocacy. Whether assessing how access and socioeconomic disparities impact health or discovering new correlations between glucose levels and cognitive function in individuals with diabetes, their work underscores our commitment to tackling health care challenges through community-driven research.

None of this would be possible without a mission, a vision, and a drive to serve our communities. We spent the past year working with individuals throughout the college to envision our future and solidify our values and foundation. What resulted was a new, five-year strategic plan that ushers in the next chapter of the College of Medicine.

Launched on July 1, 2024, our strategic plan serves as a compass for our initiatives and resource allocation. As we navigate the dynamic health care landscape, one thing remains constant: our dedication to our communities and all those we serve.

We go into our five-year strategic plan excited to continue growing our roots and overcoming health care challenges to find new heights in transforming care in our communities.

To all our partners, donors, alumni, faculty, staff, and students—thank you for joining us on this journey.

Sincerely,

James M. Record, MD, JD, FACP
Professor and Dean



By the Numbers

EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS

9 degrees and certificates offered

220+
medical education clinical affiliates



OUR STUDENT BODY

312

Medical Program students

51 Nutrition and Exercise Physiology students

90 Speech and Hearing Sciences students

12 Certificate in Medical Ethics students

9 Master of Healthcare Administration and Leadership students



OUR FACULTY AND STAFF

486
full-time faculty
and staff

2000+
community faculty

Clinical sciences faculty
teaching across
24 specialties



OUR RESEARCH ENTERPRISE

\$154,724,020

total research funding through fiscal year 2023–24

Philanthropy Impact

Investing in Patient Care Does Not End at Retirement

For longtime Spokane couple Nelson Roger Cooke, MD, and Judy Cooke, ARNP, the passion to ensure everyone has access to quality health care did not end when they hung up their stethoscopes. While the neurologist and registered nurse are no longer treating patients, they are dedicated to training more doctors to serve in Washington, especially in rural areas. They're doing so by investing in the WSU Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine.

To help fill a critical need in some of the most medically underserved communities in the state, the Cookes established the N. Roger and Judy Cooke Endowment Fund to help support Native American medical students enrolled at the College of Medicine.

"Tribal members prefer to see other Native American doctors, but they are a small percentage of American doctors," said Dr. Cooke. "That motivated me to set up this scholarship fund, to help put more young Native Americans into the medical profession. I hope to see them practice in their home communities when they finish their training."

According to the American Association of Medical Colleges, only 0.3% of doctors across the country identify as American Indian or Alaska Native (AI/AN) as of 2019. AI/AN people have a disproportionate disease burden and have a life expectancy that is 5.5 years less than the U.S. population overall, according to the Indian Health Service.

Growing up in the rural Washington communities of Omak and Chehalis, Dr. Cooke saw firsthand the impact of limited health care access, especially among Native American populations. He traveled the country—and the world—completing his medical training at Yale, doing volunteer work in Africa, and honing a specialty in neurology at the Mayo Clinic before deciding to return to his home state to practice.

The Cookes moved to Spokane in 1975. Judy worked as a registered nurse and later a psychiatric nurse and advanced registered nurse practitioner. Dr. Cooke practiced neurology for 43 years—three decades



BY THE NUMBERS

- Our generous donors provided **\$1.4 million** for student scholarships in fiscal year 2023–24, investing in future health care providers.
- We raised a total of **\$12.7 million** to support the college’s clinical, educational, and research initiatives, achieving **168%** of our annual fundraising goal of \$7.5 million.
- The college’s scholarship endowment reached **\$4.1 million**, with a goal of securing \$25 million to support WSU College of Medicine students in perpetuity.

consulting at all Spokane area hospitals and 11 years at the multiple sclerosis clinic at Providence Holy Family Hospital. All the while, as a trusted voice in the Spokane medical community, Dr. Cooke recognized the need for a community-based medical school in Washington.

“I wanted a new medical school in eastern Washington,” Dr. Cooke said. “I was clinical faculty teaching neurology to residents from the University of Washington for years. But I felt it was time to get a second medical school and base it in eastern Washington with the goal of training people to stay in Washington.”

When that dream became a reality, Dr. Cooke invested his time in supporting the new college and was one of the first in the region’s health care community to join the founding faculty members. He taught neurology to the first three classes of WSU medical students.

“Being a part of that first year was the best,” Dr. Cooke added referring to the inaugural MD class that began the program in 2017. “They seemed highly motivated, that first class, and that was a real treat to go to their graduation.”

Dr. Cooke retired from his practice and teaching in 2020, but he and his wife keep the college close to their hearts. They stay connected to students by attending events, like the WSU Native American Health Sciences Honoring Ceremony, also called a Blanketing Ceremony, where they can meet the next generation of health care leaders. And of course, by generously supporting students through their scholarship fund and an estate gift.

Dr. and Mrs. Cooke reduce the financial burden of medical education for our highly motivated and mission-aligned learners and make it possible for our student doctors to train in the communities they want to serve.

If you would like to learn more about giving opportunities at the college, please email give.medicine@wsu.edu.



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Clinical Care

BY THE NUMBERS

CLINICAL CARE IN THE COMMUNITY

The Washington State University Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine is caring for our community in partnership with Range Community Clinic.

Fiscal year 2023–24

Autism and Neurodevelopmental Clinic

120+ unique patients

700+ patient visits

Speech-Language Pathology Clinic

50+ unique patients

900+ patient visits

WSU Spokane Student Health Services

390+ unique patients

870+ patient visits

Mobile Health Care

440+ unique patients

500+ patient visits

Through the William A. Crosetto and Albert Ravenholt Mobile Health Care Units

PERSONALIZED NUTRITION AND EXERCISE COACHING

Nutrition and Exercise Physiology students provide tailored exercise coaching and nutrition counseling to clients.

Nutrition and Exercise Physiology Health and Fitness Clinic

40+ unique clients

1600+ client sessions

RESIDENTS IN THE COMMUNITY

WSU College of Medicine's residents play a critical role in providing care to their regions.

Internal Medicine Residency Program

40 residents spent **67,980+ hours**

providing care to the greater Everett, Washington community

Family Medicine Residency Program

3 residents spent **8,400+ hours** providing care to the greater Pullman, Washington community

New Clinic Improves Access to Timely Care for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

WSU's new Autism and Neurodevelopmental Clinic has improved access to timely and high-quality care for eastern Washington children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) through reduced wait times and a more efficient multidisciplinary model.

The average wait time for an ASD evaluation in Washington ranges from an estimated 12 months to as long as two years, according to the program's directors. Launched in April 2023, the clinic has been able to evaluate referred patients within four months, ensuring these children receive intervention during their early years of brain development, which dramatically affects their developmental trajectory.

"The clinic has far exceeded our expectations," said Georgina Lynch, PhD, CCC-SLP, WSU Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine associate professor and co-director of the college's Autism and Neurodevelopmental Program of Excellence.

Located on the WSU Spokane campus and operated by the Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences in partnership with the WSU-affiliated nonprofit Range Community Clinic, the clinic provides diagnostic evaluations and comprehensive treatment planning for children with ASD aged 18 months to 18 years. Helping to fill a critical need for more autism services in Washington, the clinic received 528 referrals and conducted 308 clinical encounters in 2023.

"We were all very aware of the need, but the response has been exponentially more than what even we had anticipated," said Clinical Director Nalini Gupta, MD, DCH, FAAP.

While the typical appointment no-show rate for specialty pediatric care is about 20% to 30%, Gupta said, the clinic has not had a single no-show since it opened, which is a testament to its value for patients and their families.

The clinic also exceeded its three-year goal of receiving referrals from 15 distinct medical practices in Washington within the first several months of opening. It now receives referrals from across the state and provides services to children from 11 counties.

The clinic is the first of its kind in eastern Washington to employ a multidisciplinary model for diagnosing ASD where patients see several specialists in one building over the course of a four-hour evaluation. This greatly increases the efficiency of the diagnostic process and minimizes school and work disruptions for patients and their families.

"The responses from patients and their families have been nothing but positive, which goes a long way to show that the model that we have is working and it's working well," said Gupta.

In 2023, the clinic received 528 referrals and conducted 308 clinical encounters





College Brings Bilingual Speech Therapy Camp to Tri-Cities

The WSU Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine's Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences successfully launched its first intensive bilingual speech therapy and early literacy summer camp at Trios Care Center in Kennewick, Washington.

Modeled after Camp Candoo, Camp I Can Say It! / Campamento ¡Puedo decirlo! was held in collaboration with bilingual community speech-language pathologists (SLPs) and offered to bilingual children ages 5–7 with childhood apraxia of speech or other severe speech disorders.

"The camp went exceptionally well," said department Chair Amy Meredith, PhD, CCC-SLP. "We accomplished everything we aimed to with the children to help them with their motor speech and expressive language skills."

Campers worked with bilingual SHS graduate students and supervising SLPs for a week of individual and group therapy sessions. Therapy was conducted in Spanish and

English, based on each child's preferred language, using dynamic tactile temporal cueing and focusing on functional phrases like "Do you want to play?"

Aretha Vasconcelos' son was not making progress with typical therapies before participating in the camp but spoke several words he had never said before in his very first session.

"The professionalism, care, and dedication of Dr. Amy and her team gave us hope and made my son improve his speech as I never imagined possible in just one week," Vasconcelos said. "As a mother, I will forever be grateful for everything they did."

In addition to graduate student clinicians and volunteer SLPs, the camp was made possible through community partnerships with Trios Care Center and the Pasco, Kennewick, and Richland school districts.

New Training Brings Innovative Speech Disorder Intervention to Providers Nationwide

Professional training in an innovative early intervention method for childhood speech and language disorders developed by WSU College of Medicine Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences researchers is now available nationwide through an accredited online course.

Professor Emeritus Nancy Potter, PhD, CCC-SLP, and Associate Professor Mark VanDam, PhD, created Babble Boot Camp with collaborators across the country as a proactive and evidence-based way to prevent or minimize speech and language disorders in babies and toddlers with conditions that put them at risk for such disorders. The approach is unique for intervening before children start talking and show signs of a speech delay.

In the intervention, a speech-language pathologist coaches parents through short weekly therapy sessions on a sequence of activities to implement with their child from birth to age 24 months, capitalizing on an early window of brain development.

“Your baby is doing so many awesome things,” said Potter. “Babble Boot Camp is all about helping parents encourage the baby to take the next step.”

The researchers tested the intervention in babies with classic galactosemia, a rare metabolic disease diagnosed during newborn screening that greatly increases the likelihood of developing a severe speech or language disorder. The NIH-funded clinical trial found that Babble Boot Camp effectively supported speech and language development and resulted in typical language scores for participating children, even several years later.

“The results have been spectacular,” said Potter.

With the launch of the Babble Boot Camp Basic Training course, speech-language pathologists and early childhood specialists can now learn how to implement the intervention in their professional practice and earn American Speech-Language-Hearing Association continuing education credit. Parents and other caregivers can also take the course for their learning.

Potter developed the course with SHS graduates Victoria Heinlen, MS, CCC-SLP, and Claire Schrock, MS, CF-SLP, who now work as speech-language pathologists.

“Babble Boot Camp is all about helping parents encourage the baby to take the next step.”

— Nancy Potter, PhD, CCC-SLP
Professor Emeritus, Speech and Hearing Sciences



Community Collaborations

Pathway and Outreach Programs Bridge the Gap for Students Interested in Medicine

Building a workforce of health care leaders starts by inspiring children and teens to pursue a career in the field and providing inclusive pathway programs to help them gain hands-on learning and experience related to

medicine. These collaborations create a lasting impact on communities across Washington—many in rural and underserved urban areas—where students can begin to see themselves pursuing careers in health professions.



BY THE NUMBERS

ONE YEAR: UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES

Pathway Programs

Educating **28** students in targeted programs for high school and college students interested in medicine.

Outreach Programs

Educating **900** middle and high school students in collaboration with nine Washington school districts.



Partnership for Health Innovation Announced to Improve Health Outcomes, Medical Education

The WSU Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine, Pacific Lutheran University (PLU), and MultiCare announced the Partnership for Health Innovation in February 2024. The exciting new partnership unites the organizations around two common goals: preparing students to become local health care leaders and improving health outcomes in Pierce County, particularly for traditionally underserved and vulnerable populations in Parkland-Spanaway and the surrounding unincorporated area.

“Together, we will develop innovative programs and resources that will positively impact the health and well-being of this community,” PLU President Allan Belton said. “That impact will be achieved through providing quality health services and through the education and training of future health care leaders.”

MultiCare CEO Bill Robertson announced that the partnership will include the construction of the MultiCare Medical Center at PLU. Funded by MultiCare and located on the PLU campus, the new center will provide high-quality, culturally appropriate outpatient services to the almost 200,000 people in and around Central Pierce County and learning opportunities for PLU and WSU students pursuing health care careers.

“Joining together with Pacific Lutheran University and Washington State University’s College of Medicine to launch this Partnership for Health Innovation was a natural fit for our organization. I’m confident that our partnership is going to play a significant role in the future of health care and health care education for our region,” Robertson said.

The College of Medicine announced plans to place medical students throughout Central Pierce County who will train in and provide care to the community, have opportunities to live on the PLU campus, and have access to PLU and MultiCare instructional and clinical facilities. Additionally, future partnership plans include increasing access to graduate medical education for WSU residents to encourage them to complete their training in Pierce County.

“We are deeply committed to expanding medical education and health care access in communities across Washington,” said Jim Record, MD, JD, FACP, dean of the WSU Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine. “Launching this new initiative will allow us to change the health care ecosystem and take an important step toward helping Pierce County residents access the equitable health care they need.”

Medical Students Drive Local Change Through Health Equity Circle

A program founded by an Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine faculty member is showing future doctors, nurses, and pharmacists how they can organize to bring about change.

Luis Manriquez, MD, community health equity director at the college, started the [Health Equity Circle](#) as a medical student at the University of Washington. Today, the Health Equity Circle (HEC) program consists of student-led chapters across the West, with the Spokane chapter encompassing health sciences students from WSU, the University of Washington, and Gonzaga University. The chapters then work with local nonprofits and social service agencies to meet local needs.

“Most students aren’t from Spokane, so there’s usually a lot of desire to be engaged with the community and very little knowledge or connection already,” Manriquez said. “The HEC helps make that link.”

In Spokane, HEC projects include a mental health pilot project in schools and daycare centers; organizing emergency warming shelters for those experiencing homelessness; creating a pop-up library offering paraclinical support; providing training on how to use naloxone to reverse an opioid overdose; and reducing language barriers in accessing health care, among others.

For second-year medical student Noushyar Panahpour Eslami, co-leader of HEC’s Harm Reduction Action Team, student-driven leadership and advocacy are defining qualities of the HEC.



“HEC doesn’t have physicians or special interest groups in charge of it. Nobody is telling us what to do or care about,” Panahpour Eslami said. “We are simply just some medical students who cared enough to try to make health care a bit better in this state.”

Second-year medical student and co-lead of the Harm Reduction Action Team Kishanee Haththotuwegama sees her HEC involvement as a way of shaping not only her community’s future but her own.

“Taking direct action with HEC has given me a chance to envision my future—a career in which, regardless of specialty, I can build, support, and advocate within my community,” Haththotuwegama said. “It has also given me tools I can use in this work and outside of it: how to speak up, plan, and adapt within a health care system not built to serve our marginalized communities.”

Although HEC largely draws from first- and second-year medical students still based on the college’s main campus in Spokane, many students are carrying the work forward as they proceed in their careers, Manriquez noted.

“We have alumni, now residents, seeing similar needs or working to recreate similar initiatives such as street medicine in their new communities,” Manriquez said. “This is more than our community-based clinical education. This is educating students to be leaders in the continued transformation of health care and health equity.”

Community Partners Honored with Awards Ceremonies

As a community-based medical school, community partners play an essential role in our efforts to serve Washington and beyond through collaboration and problem-solving. Each of the college's regional learning communities gathered for their annual Community Partner Award Ceremonies to honor our community faculty for their unwavering dedication and support to our school and its students.

OUTSTANDING CLINICAL TEACHER – MS1/MS2

Rachel Skalina, MD, Everett
Rick Whitehead, MD, Spokane
Ying Zhuo, MD, Tri-Cities
Frances Ch'en, MD, Vancouver

OUTSTANDING CLINICAL TEACHER – ACADEMIC HALF DAY

Elham Rahmati, MD, Everett
Julie Kaczmark, MD, Spokane
Kevin Taylor, MD, Tri-Cities
Stephanie Griffith, MD, Vancouver

OUTSTANDING CLINICAL TEACHER – MS3

Sloan Winkes, MD, Everett
Hinah Parker, MD, Spokane
Brian Sollers, DO, Tri-Cities
Elzbieta Zdanowicz, MD, Vancouver

OUTSTANDING CLINICAL TEACHER – MS4

George Diaz, MD, Everett
Jessica Kohring, MD, Spokane
Cory N. Mitchell, MD, Tri-Cities
Daniel Stein, MD, Vancouver

OUTSTANDING SERVICE OF EDUCATION AWARD

Wendy Stockwell, Spokane
Cally Rehn, Spokane
Nicholas Manke, PA-C, Tri-Cities
Melissa Dietrich, RN, Vancouver

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Cambree McCoy, Everett
Kristen Wyrick, MD, Everett
Paul Grubb, MD, Spokane
Glenn Ello, MD & the **Nursing Team from Kadlec Labor and Delivery unit**, Tri-Cities
The **Free Clinic of Southwest Washington**, Vancouver



66 Dr. Z is the ideal preceptor to get to learn from. She is incredibly bright, kind, and works incredibly hard to excel in her field. She builds such great and trusting relationships with her patients and seamlessly integrates me into the care of the patient and their family. She takes time to give me freedom to learn and prepares her entire clinic day around making sure I am learning and expanding my knowledge of pediatric medicine. She prepares cases to review and provides a safe place to build a knowledge base that will be helpful to me in whatever path I go on in medicine.

Education

First Residency Program Graduates Inaugural Class of Physicians

The WSU Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine's first graduate medical education program, established in partnership with Providence Regional Medical Center in Everett to train internal medicine physicians, has graduated its first cohort of doctors.

The 12 resident physicians became attending physicians, qualified to practice medicine independently, in a June ceremony marking their completion of three years of training.

"This group of individuals are very dedicated to the patients they serve and to making a difference in the community through advocacy and outreach work," said Program Director Matthew Hansen, MD. "It's been incredibly rewarding to see them grow over the last three years and to see the difference the program has made in the community."

Most of the graduates plan to stay in the Pacific Northwest to practice medicine as hospitalists or primary care physicians. Others will pursue additional specialized training or stay with the program for an additional year as chief residents.

The internal medicine residency welcomed its inaugural cohort in 2021 and now has 40 resident physicians working through the three-year program.

In its first three years, the program has brought more doctors to Washington communities and partnered with Providence Medical Group to launch a large primary care clinic in Everett. Program faculty and residents designed two specialty initiatives at the clinic to care for complex cases—patients with heart failure and advanced liver disease—

resulting in decreased emergency room visits and hospitalizations. Residents also practice street medicine, providing care outside typical clinic and hospital settings.

Program leadership have significantly expanded the program's community partnerships since its launch, adding more than 10 new partners to its five main training sites, including the Everett VA Clinic, the Tulalip Health System serving the Tulalip Tribes, and Lahai Health, which serves low-income populations.



“It is very rewarding to know that the future is in good hands.”

— Christian Rocholl, MD
Program Director,
Pediatric Residency
Program



New Pediatric Residency Welcomes First Cohort of Physicians to Eastern Washington

Six new doctors joined the Spokane medical community this summer as the WSU Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine’s pediatric residency program welcomed its inaugural class of residents.

Established last year in partnership with Providence Sacred Heart Children’s Hospital and the first of its kind in eastern Washington, the program aims to train well-rounded pediatricians and improve the care of children in the Inland Northwest.

Lara Khalil, MD, Lindsey Klein, DO, Anh Pham, DO, McKenna Smith, DO, Parvin Uddin, MD, and Noelia Torres, MD, will work at community hospitals and clinics in Spokane. Three of the six attended medical school in Washington, including Khalil, who earned her MD from the WSU College of Medicine in May.

When interviewing applicants, program leadership looked for those with ties to the Pacific Northwest who had

demonstrated leadership, academic excellence, and a commitment to pediatrics.

“The whole process was really rewarding,” said Program Director Christian Rocholl, MD. “You’re interviewing these people who are really energetic, really eager to work in pediatrics and to learn pediatrics. It is very rewarding to know that the future is in good hands.”

The three-year training program, which was made possible through support from Premera Blue Cross, the Providence Inland Northwest Foundation, Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals, and the Community Cancer Fund, will have 18 residents at a time once all cohorts are filled.

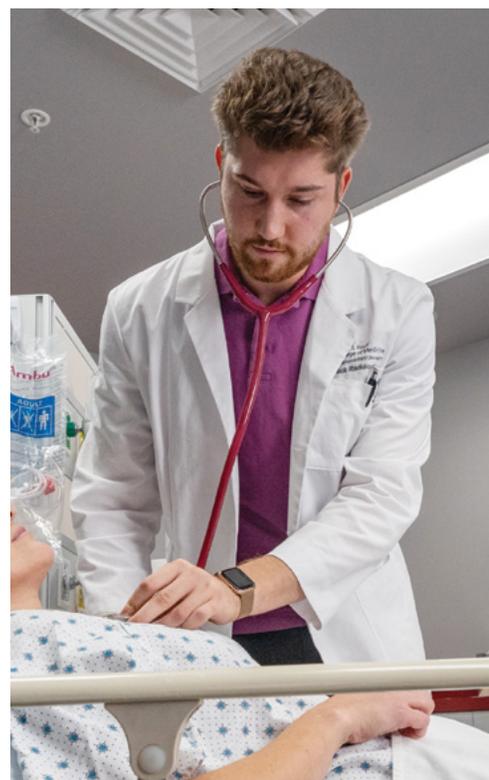
Eastern Washington has half as many pediatricians per capita as western Washington, according to American Board of Pediatrics data. Having a pediatric residency program on the eastern side of the state increases the chances of attracting pediatricians to the communities that need them most.

MD Program Trains Tomorrow's Health Care Leaders

The WSU Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine's community-based model of medical education allows learners to train at one of four regional locations across Washington: Everett, Spokane, Tri-Cities, and Vancouver. Medical students gain clinical experience training in a wide range of settings, from large hospitals in urban centers to small clinics in rural communities. Exposure to the full spectrum of health care settings allows our students to explore career options and learn how to achieve outstanding health outcomes for their patients, regardless of where they choose to practice.



312
future
doctors
enrolled
in the MD
Program





**100%
Residency
Attainment**



The Next Step: Match Day 2024

The WSU College of Medicine matched 100% of its fourth-year medical students into residency as we celebrated Match Day on March 15, 2024. Sixty-six new doctors are now filling critical gaps in the health care industry amid an ongoing doctor shortage, particularly in rural areas throughout Washington and across the county.

An impressive 71% of the Class of 2024 will remain in the West for their residencies. This includes 29% who will stay in Washington. More than half chose primary care specialties, which include family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, internal medicine/pediatrics, and obstetrics and gynecology.

SPECIALTIES MATCHED INTO:

- Anesthesiology
- Diagnostic Radiology
- Emergency Medicine
- Family Medicine
- General Surgery
- Internal Medicine
- Internal Medicine/Pediatrics
- Interventional Radiology
- Obstetrics and Gynecology
- Orthopaedic Surgery
- Pediatrics
- Pediatrics/Psychiatry/Child Psychiatry
- Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
- Psychiatry
- Urology



**29%
Matched in
Washington**



First MD Graduates Fulfill Mission to Serve Washington Communities as Doctors

The WSU Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine is delivering on its promise to train more doctors to serve Washington communities. As the college's inaugural class of medical doctors complete their post-graduate training in residency programs across the country and decide where to practice medicine as fully qualified physicians, most are choosing Washington.

For Brent Conrad, MD, the choice was an easy one. Raised on a small wheat farm near Colfax, Washington, he knew he wanted to be a doctor from an early age after performing basic first aid on an elementary school classmate with a skinned knee and shadowing doctors as a high school student at a Colfax clinic.

He'll now be practicing at that same clinic as a physician. After earning his medical degree at WSU and completing Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center's Family Medicine Residency in Spokane, Conrad will practice at Whitman Hospital and Medical Clinics in Colfax and Tekoa.

"I used to daydream about walking around those halls and being one of the docs, and now it's actually happening,"

he said. "I'm excited to be back, and I think the community is excited too. I wouldn't have made it this far if it wasn't for the people of Colfax and Whitman County who really encouraged me and supported me all along the way."

After earning a medical degree, doctors complete an additional three to seven years of training in their chosen specialty through a residency program, which is part of the process of becoming a licensed physician. Approximately half of the college's inaugural class of 60 medical students chose the primary care specialties of family medicine, internal medicine, and pediatrics, which require three years of training. With their residencies complete, they can now practice medicine independently or pursue additional specialized training.

According to a recent alumni survey, 74% of respondents plan to go into practice, with 94% planning to practice in Washington or considering it. Nearly a third plan to practice in eastern Washington or other rural areas, bringing more primary care physicians to underserved regions of the state.

Post-residency Plans

26%

Plan to pursue fellowships or other specialized training*

74%

Plan to go into practice*

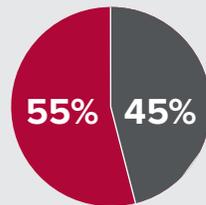
Practicing in Washington



Residency graduates plan to practice in Washington or are considering it*

Specialties

Primary care specialties



Other specialties

*Based on a 2024 alumni survey with an 82% response rate.

I was born and raised in Washington. This is my home, and these are the communities I want to give back to.

— Michaela Fallon, MD
Class of 2021

“This is the realization of what we were founded to do,” said Leila Harrison, PhD, Vice Dean for Admissions, Student Affairs, and Alumni Engagement.

The College of Medicine was established in 2015 after the Washington State Legislature authorized WSU to create an accredited medical school with the aim of training more physicians to serve the state. The MD program uses a holistic admissions process that considers applicants’ ties to Washington and commitment to serving the state’s medically underserved and historically marginalized communities.

That holistic admissions process is working. Graduates will practice in communities across Washington where they have strong personal or professional ties.

Seattle native Michaela Fallon, MD, plans to continue serving the patients she established relationships with while completing the Swedish Cherry Hill Family Medicine

Residency’s rural training track, working and volunteering in Port Angeles and nearby towns.

“I was born and raised in Washington. This is my home, and these are the communities I want to give back to,” she said.

While many graduates leave the state for residency and may not return immediately, most report planning to return in the future. Charlotte Cronenweth, MD, completed her internal medicine training at Oregon Health and Science University in Portland this year and plans to practice in the area as a hospitalist while her husband, who she met as a medical student at WSU, completes his residency there.

“We’re both looking forward to eventually making our way back to Washington,” she said. “Our ultimate goal is to serve the communities that trained us.”

Successive alumni classes are also in the process of completing their training and will eventually join their peers in the health care workforce.

College Sees Successes with New Master in Health Administration and Leadership

Creating Health Care Leaders

The Master of Healthcare Administration and Leadership program at the WSU Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine, in partnership with the WSU Carson College of Business, trains current and future health care leaders with the skills needed to thrive and take on systemic challenges in health.

100%
completion rate
for the Leadership
Certificate since its
launch in fall 2023

“I loved the sessions because there were guest speakers with perspectives that we would not have received otherwise. They might have been my favorite part.”





100%
job placement or
further education
(within 12 months
of graduation)

100%
program retention

100%
exit exam pass rate

WSU Dietetics Program Prepares Graduates for Immediate Job Placement

The WSU College of Medicine Department of Nutrition and Exercise Physiology is seeing consistent success in the Master of Science Coordinated Program in Dietetics, Nutrition and Exercise Physiology (MS CPD). With perfect retention and completion rates, more WSU-trained health care leaders are entering the workforce.

The MS CPD degree prepares graduate-level students to become registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs), and that's what many of these students are doing. Over the past five years, graduates have achieved a 100% job placement rate in nutrition and dietetics or related fields, or they have pursued further educational opportunities within 12 months of graduation.

The program is designed to help students hit the ground running. Nineteen graded credits in the curriculum comprised of experiential rotation courses to meet the minimum 1,000 hours of supervised practice required by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND). This means students don't have to complete the supervised practice hours after graduation.

The curriculum also includes a required exit exam for degree completion. In the past three years, 100% of students have passed the MS CPD exit exam, which also prepares them to take and pass the national credentialing exam to become an RDN.

Benchmarks like these can be difficult to achieve as similar programs across the country contend with dropping enrollment. WSU's program, on the other hand, is seeing stable enrollment numbers with impressive program completion.

"We've had a 100% retention rate over the last three years and that says a lot," said April Davis, PhD, RDN, ACSM-CEP, associate professor and the director of graduate dietetics. "Once students are in, they're staying and they're succeeding."

Davis says students are attracted to the hands-on training and interprofessional educational opportunities offered through the College of Medicine and WSU Health Sciences.



Master of Science Speech and Hearing Sciences Program Prepares Graduates for Professional Success

BY THE NUMBERS

- **100%** five-year praxis examination pass rate for speech-language pathologist certification
- **100%** job placement rate for the class of 2023 within 12 months after graduation
- **95%** job placement rate for the class of 2024 within one month after graduation, with 50% working in educational settings and 45% in clinical settings

Speech and Hearing Sciences Students Experience Hands-On Learning, Real-World Impact

The new Speech-Language Pathology Clinic, run in partnership with Range Community Clinic, has helped students in the WSU College of Medicine’s Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences put theory into practice by serving clients with a wide variety of communication and swallowing disorders.

The clinic provides a high-tech, hands-on training environment for the next generation of speech-language pathologists (SLPs), who will go on to serve and lead in their communities. It also allows students and SLPs to make an impact in Spokane and surrounding communities by providing advanced diagnostic and treatment services to people of all ages with communication and hearing challenges.

“We have had the opportunity to hold nearly 1,000 appointments this past year,” said department Chair Amy Meredith, PhD, CC-SLP. “While we are still growing our client base, we are expanding our offered services and improving continuity of care.”

The clinic boasts several individual and group speech-therapy rooms containing diagnostic and treatment equipment, including acoustic measurement for voice and resonance, which benefits individuals recovering from a stroke, traumatic brain injury, progressive neurological diseases, paradoxical

vocal fold movement disorder, and other conditions. Individual treatment rooms are set up for in-person and telehealth sessions, allowing flexibility for clients who cannot easily come to the clinic.

The clinic’s evolved model offers year-long client services, a growing clinical educator team, and wider practicum experiences for students. Students train with flexible and rigid endoscopes, a valuable clinical tool, and other specialized technology to enhance their clinical competencies and deliver well-rounded SLP services to an expanded panel of clients.

The new clinic also is filling a previously identified health care gap: training with adult populations. While the former clinic, operated in partnership with EWU, primarily worked with pediatric clients, students are now gaining increased experience working with adult populations. For Meredith, this shift is significant.

“When students go to their off-site practicums, they have more background knowledge,” said Meredith. “This is particularly important when they go into high-stakes medical environments.”



“We are expanding our offered services and improving continuity of care.”

— Amy Meredith, PhD, CC-SLP
Chair, Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences

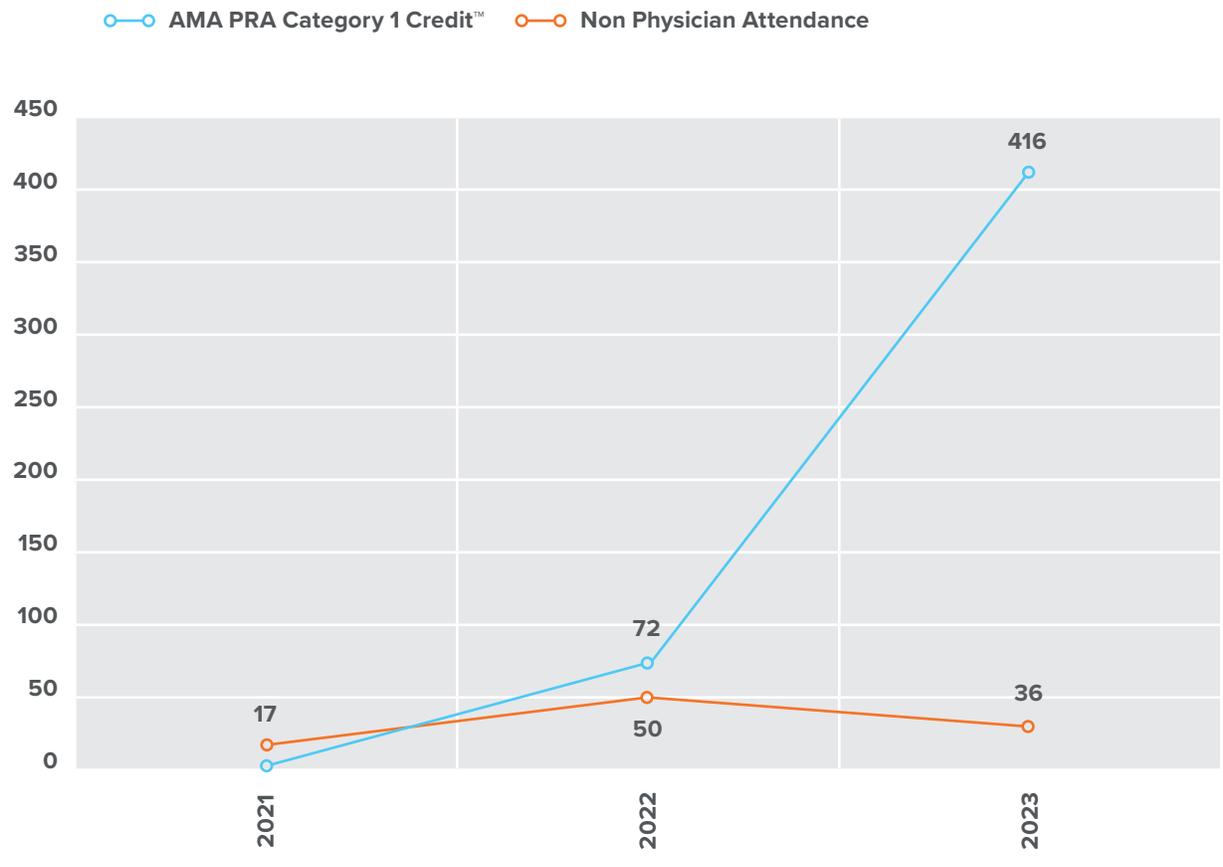
Setting Standards of Excellence Through Continuing Medical Education

Our Continuing Medical Education (CME) opportunities let health care leaders stay at the top of their game through evidence-based education to improve their competence, performance, and patient outcomes.

40+
CME sessions
accredited

450+
unique learners
who claimed
CME credits

Credits Awarded Over Time

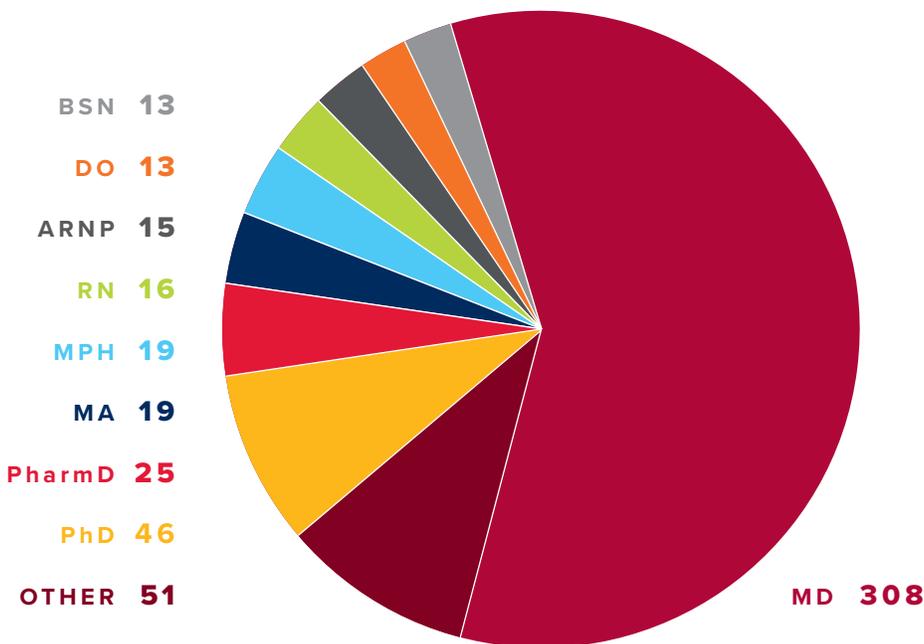




“Physicians must continue learning long after medical school—it’s part of who we are. WSU CME helps physicians and other health professionals go beyond just meeting requirements and excel at caring for the patients and communities they serve.”

— Andrea Keesey
Associate Director
for CME

CME Credits Awarded by Degree Type



Research

BY THE NUMBERS

RESEARCH

- **80+** research faculty
- **100+** active research projects
- **185+** research publications
- **Top 10** in National Institutes of Health funding among community-based medical schools*

Fiscal year 2023–24.

*According to Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research data.

\$30.6 million

in sponsored project expenditures

Groundbreaking Discoveries Drive Health Care Breakthroughs and Promote Health Equity

ChatGPT Fails at Heart Risk Assessment

New research from the WSU Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine indicates it would be unwise to rely on ChatGPT when deciding whether a patient with chest pain needs to be hospitalized.

Published in the journal *PLOS ONE*, the study found the generative AI program provided inconsistent heart risk assessments in thousands of simulated cases, sometimes scoring the same patient's risk as low or intermediate and sometimes as high. The chatbot also failed to match the traditional methods physicians use to judge a patient's cardiac risk.



"We found there was a lot of variation, and that variation in approach can be dangerous," said lead author and WSU College of Medicine Associate Professor **Thomas Heston**, MD, FAAFP, FACNM. "It can be a useful tool, but I think the technology is going a lot faster than our understanding of it, so it's critically important that we do a lot of research, especially in these high-stakes clinical situations."

The researchers believe the problem is likely due to the level of randomness built into the current version of the software, which helps it vary its responses to simulate natural language.

Despite the study's findings, Heston sees great potential for generative AI in health care, such as for generating a differential diagnosis.

"It could be good at helping you think through a problem, but it's not good at giving the answer," he said.



Rural and Minority Dementia Patients Face Disparities in Access to Neurologists

Washington residents who live outside of urban areas as well as Native American and Hispanic or Latinx residents face longer travel distances to see a neurologist for dementia care, according to a study led by WSU College of Medicine researchers and published in the journal [*Alzheimer's & Dementia*](#).

These disparities could be contributing to delayed diagnoses, which can result in higher costs of care, reduced chances of preserving cognitive function, and lower quality of life for dementia patients, the researchers said.



“We are facing an increasing demand for physicians who can meet the needs of people with Alzheimer’s disease or related dementias as the number of people diagnosed is rising,” said lead study author **Solmaz Amiri**, DDes,

MSc, a researcher in the College of Medicine’s Institute for Research and Education to Advance Community Health

(IREACH). “Given this added burden of access in rural and minoritized populations, we need to better understand the barriers people face in accessing care so we can help them achieve better dementia outcomes.”

The researchers analyzed state death records for nearly 95,000 Washington residents who were identified as having Alzheimer’s disease or related dementias. Calculating the distance from each person’s home to the closest neurologist, they found it ranged from 9 miles for urban residents to more than 100 miles for rural residents. Distances were also greater on average for Native American and Hispanic or Latinx residents.

Amiri said the findings could help inform the placement of future medical resources such as neurology practices, residency programs, and medical student rotations. Other potential solutions include offering people living in rural areas care via telemedicine or through mobile health care units.

Shift Work Raises Risk of Diabetes and Obesity through Newly Discovered Molecular Mechanism

Just a few days on a night shift schedule disrupts protein rhythms related to blood glucose regulation, energy metabolism, and inflammation, processes that can influence the development of chronic metabolic conditions, according to a study led by researchers at the WSU College of Medicine and the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory.

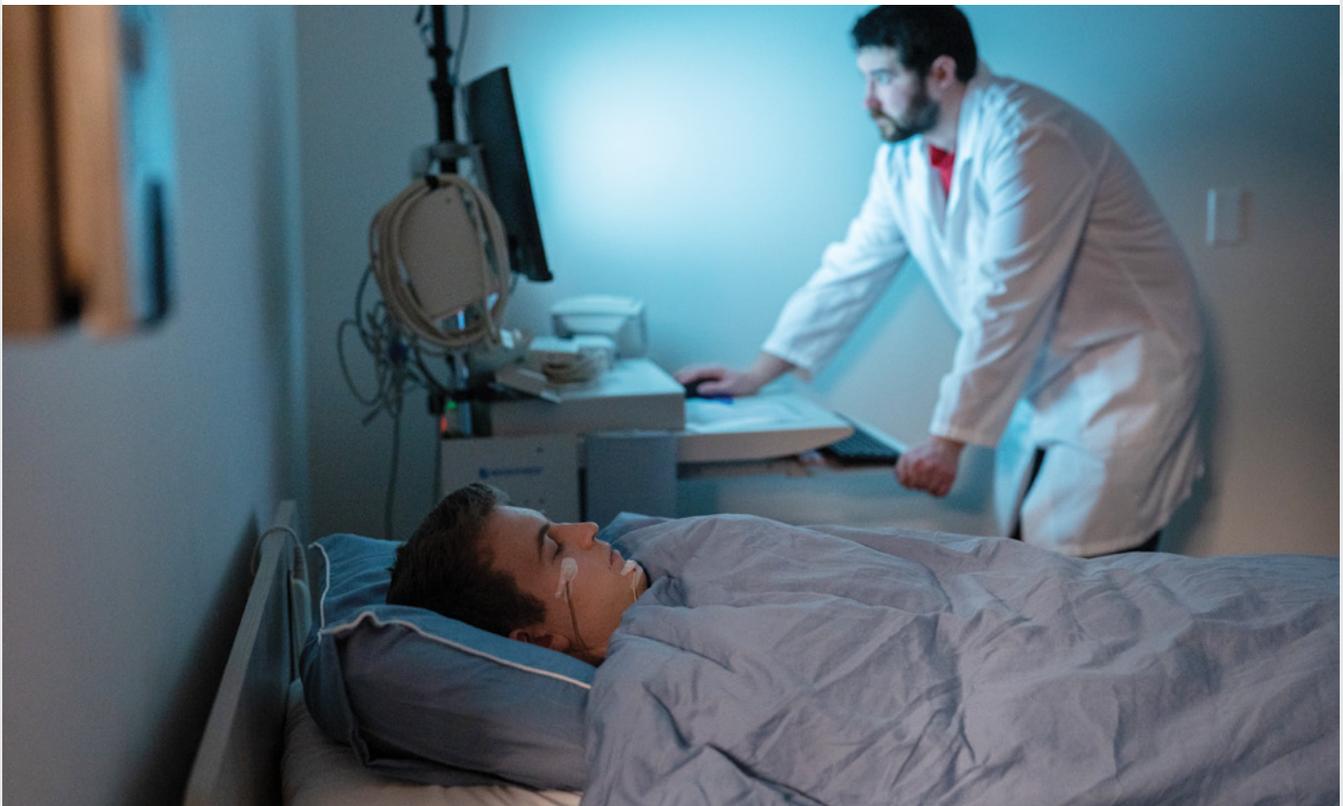
Published in the *Journal of Proteome Research*, the finding provides new clues as to why night shift workers are more prone to diabetes, obesity, and other metabolic disorders.

“When internal rhythms are dysregulated, you have this enduring stress in your system that we believe has



long-term health consequences,” said senior study author and College of Medicine Professor **Hans Van Dongen, PhD.**

The study consisted of a controlled laboratory experiment where volunteers were put on simulated night or day shift schedules for three days. Although more research is needed, Van Dongen said the finding that these rhythms can be disrupted in such a short time suggests that early intervention to prevent diabetes and obesity is possible. Such intervention could also help lower the risk of heart disease and stroke, which is also elevated in night shift workers.





“Our findings suggest that minimizing blood glucose extremes could help people with type 1 diabetes to improve not just their health but their cognition as well.”

— Naomi Chaytor, PhD, ABPP
Professor and chair of the
Department of Community and
Behavioral Health

Blood Sugar Lows and Highs Hamper Brain Function in Type 1 Diabetes

Large swings in blood glucose may cause slower and less accurate cognitive processing speed in individuals with type 1 diabetes, according to an NIH-funded study from the WSU College of Medicine and McLean Hospital in Massachusetts.

Cognitive processing speed—the brain’s ability to quickly respond to information—is important for a wide variety of everyday tasks, from driving to decision-making in fast-paced environments.



“Our findings suggest that minimizing blood glucose extremes could help people with type 1 diabetes to improve not just their health but their cognition as well,” said co-senior author **Naomi Chaytor**, PhD, ABPP, professor and chair of the Department of Community and Behavioral Health. “And because diabetes is a cognitively demanding disease that requires hourly decisions on how much insulin to take based

on various factors, this could also potentially prevent a situation where glucose lows and spikes send people into a spiral of worsening diabetes self-management.”

Published in [npj Digital Medicine](#), a Nature journal, the study is one of the first to investigate the impact of glucose fluctuations on cognition outside of a laboratory setting. Researchers used digital glucose monitors and smartphone-based cognitive testing to track 200 participants for a two-week period.

WIC Participation Helped Families Better Cope with 2022 Infant Formula Shortage

The WIC program—also known as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children—supports the well-being of low-income families in multiple ways beyond providing free formula and essential nutritious foods, according to a WSU College of Medicine study published in the [*Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*](#).

Families that participated in the program were much less likely to use potentially unsafe infant feeding practices during the 2022 U.S. infant formula shortage than eligible families that did not participate, the study found.

Both WIC participants and non-participants reported being affected by the shortage at similar rates, but WIC participants were significantly more likely to cope with the shortage by changing the brand or type of formula or by

getting it from a different source. They were also less likely to use less healthy feeding practices, such as using dairy milk or milk alternatives, watering down formula, or using homemade formula.



“WIC provides a safety net for infants and children, and early childhood WIC participation has long-lasting benefits for health, well-being, and academic achievement,” said lead author

Namrata Sanjeevi, PhD, a research

associate in the Department of Nutrition and Exercise Physiology. “By examining how WIC participation could be related to infant feeding practices during the formula shortage, our study adds important findings on how WIC can support families during times of crisis.”

“WIC provides a safety net for infants and children, and early childhood WIC participation has long-lasting benefits for health, well-being, and academic achievement.”

— **Namrata Sanjeevi, PhD**
Research associate in the
Department of Nutrition and
Exercise Physiology Health





Researchers Awarded \$2 Million to Study School-Based Speech Therapy Efficacy



Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences Assistant Professor **Katy Cabbage**, PhD, CCC-SLP, and a collaborator at Florida State University were awarded a \$2 million grant by the National Institute on Deafness and

Other Communications Disorders, a National Institutes of Health agency, to evaluate the progress and academic outcomes of children receiving school-based speech therapy for speech sound disorders.

The researchers will follow students at Washington and Florida schools for four years, tracking what type of therapy they receive and testing various skills during the school year, including reading, spelling, working memory, and speech production skills.

Communication disorders can negatively impact students' acquisition of reading and writing skills, which are key to their academic success and long-term life outcomes. By studying the relationship between these disorders and literacy acquisition, Cabbage aims to improve the efficacy of speech therapy interventions in schools and support school-based speech-language pathologists.

"I hope that my research will help empower kids with communication disorders to be successful, not just in their communication but in life in general," Cabbage said.

"I also want to be a voice for school-based practitioners. They are the unsung heroes making sure that all children have access to specialized services."

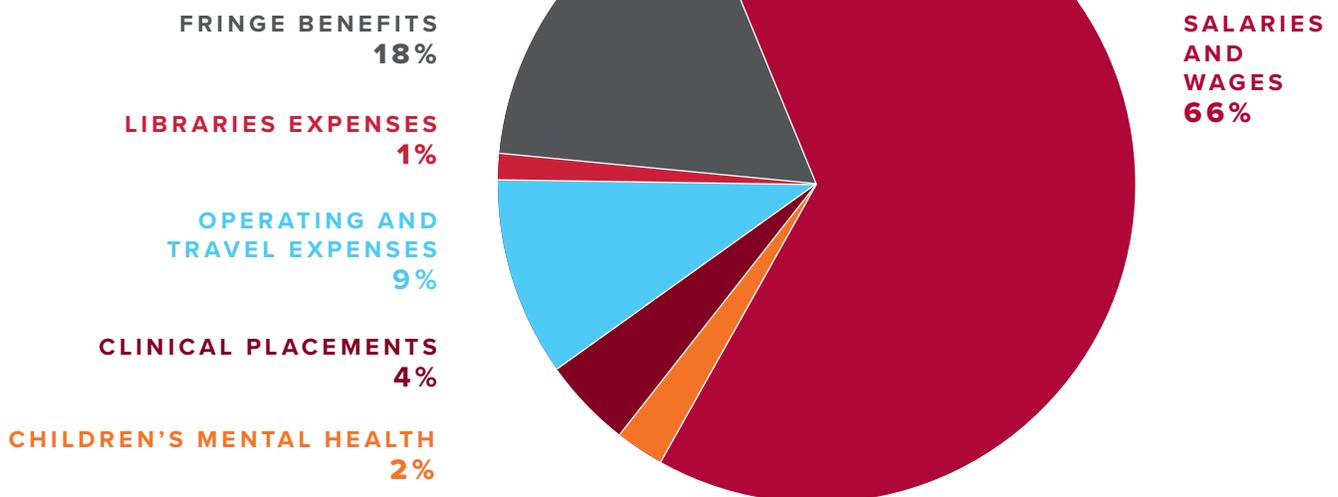
Financial Highlights

Operating Revenues

During the 2024 fiscal year, the college saw an uptick in operating revenues compared to the previous year, driven partly by an increase in centrally funded fringe benefit costs. The financial landscape was complex, with a significant \$1.2 million budget reduction being partially offset by a strategic fund transfer to cover payroll liabilities and lease acquisition costs through the end of FY24.

In addition, the college faced challenges in tuition revenue due to a 2.8% disparity between projected and actual enrollment for the 23–24 academic year, resulting in a shortfall of \$360,000 in expected tuition income. This discrepancy underscores the critical nature of precise student recruitment and retention strategies, as well as the significant financial impact that even small fluctuations in enrollment can have on the college's fiscal health.

FY 2024 Medical School Spending \$39,876,821



Profit and Loss Statement

FD001	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
CENTRAL ALLOCATIONS			
Base Budget	\$18,352,623	\$18,810,743	\$20,194,117
Enrollment-Based - After Holdback	\$10,363,296	\$11,059,053	\$10,438,684
Proviso\One-time	\$706,000	\$640,000	\$640,000
Other Allocations	-	\$565,513	\$760,538
University Annual Commitment	-	-	\$1,400,000
Annual Reduction Target	(\$1,110,100)	(\$954,000)	(\$1,225,400)
Benefit Allocation	\$5,726,060	\$6,778,309	\$7,356,831
Total Allocations	\$34,449,432	\$38,033,618	\$39,876,821

EXPENDITURES

Salaries and Wages	\$22,184,277	\$24,380,312	\$26,627,627
Benefits	\$5,726,060	\$6,778,309	\$7,356,831
Other Operating	\$5,810,642	\$6,316,121	\$5,910,413
ERP Fee @ 1.0%	\$216,967	\$239,658	\$265,201
Total Expenditures	\$33,937,946	\$37,714,400	\$40,160,072

June 30, 2024

Operating Expenses

The 2024 fiscal year brought about several noteworthy changes in the organization's financial picture. Operating expenses grew by \$2.4 million, reflecting a 6.5% increase from the previous year. A significant portion of this growth came from staff salaries and benefits, which rose by 9.2%, demonstrating the college's continued investment in its workforce.

Travel expenses also saw a notable uptick, increasing by 28.9%. This change was largely due to two main factors: an \$82,000 increase in student travel reimbursements for third and fourth-year medical students traveling to clinical rotations and an overall rise in travel costs.

As part of our efforts to achieve financial sustainability, the college also notably achieved greater cost efficiencies in purchased services. This area saw a slight decrease, primarily resulting from a thoughtful shift from contract payments to direct preceptor payments.

These financial shifts reflect the college's adaptability in a changing economic landscape, balancing increased investments in staff and student experiences with strategic cost management in other areas.

Alumni

Manifesting the Mission: Alumni Return to Train Future Generations of Physician Leaders

The WSU Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine was created to fulfill a critical need in Washington—to train more doctors to serve in communities across the state and increase access to quality health care for all. Nearly a decade ago, the college’s founders envisioned a future where those doctors would also return to train the next generation. That future has arrived.

Today, as the first class of WSU MD graduates are completing their residency programs and becoming independently practicing physicians, many are settling in Washington and rejoining the College of Medicine as faculty.



Christie Kirkpatrick Schmutz, MD, was the first to sign on as alumni faculty. She says the decision to help train WSU medical students was an easy one.

“I got a survey about whether there would be interest in being a faculty member and having students in the clinic,” said Kirkpatrick Schmutz. “I said, ‘Of course! How could I not?’ It was always a no-brainer.”

Community faculty are the backbone of the clinical education medical students receive at WSU. These faculty support students in multiple ways, including teaching in a clinical setting, facilitating small group sessions, mentoring research projects, teaching through simulation, and more.

“Dr. Kirkpatrick Schmutz will be joining a group of community-based, state-wide faculty that is over 2,000

members strong. They make our MD program possible,” said Jeff Haney, MD, chair of the Department of Medical Education and Clinical Sciences. “She will contribute to the continued formation of exceptional clinicians that will serve the state for decades to come.”

“Her service as a faculty member with us just reinforces the legacy and goals we want to achieve,” added Leila Harrison, PhD, MA, MEd, vice dean for Admissions, Student Affairs, and Alumni Engagement. “I love that our current and future students will have opportunities to learn from our very own.”

Kirkpatrick Schmutz was part of the first class of MD students to attend and graduate from the WSU College of Medicine—starting in 2017 and graduating in 2021. She grew up in Longview, Washington, and attended college in Spokane for her undergraduate degree. She says she always wanted to stay close to family and eventually practice in the state.

“I also liked the concept of being a part of something new,” added Kirkpatrick Schmutz about joining the inaugural class. “It was exciting to me to help pave the way for more future doctors to train.”

After graduating with her MD, Kirkpatrick Schmutz spent the next three years completing an internal medicine residency at Virginia Mason in Seattle. The location in her home state allowed her to stay in touch with many of her WSU classmates, former faculty mentors, and her family in Longview, where medicine is the family business.



Since graduating from residency, Kirkpatrick Schmutz has joined her father and brother in the family practice, Kirkpatrick Family Care. She will practice internal medicine and primary care, as well as weight loss medicine. The clinic serves about 15,000 patients in Longview as well as rural areas of Cowlitz and Clark Counties in southwestern Washington.

“It isn’t good enough to say we are going to do something, like select applicants who want to serve in Washington,” said Harrison. “We have to mean it, and more importantly, do it. Seeing that happen is so important to our communities.”

Kirkpatrick Schmutz will also welcome WSU medical students into her clinic for training. It’s a full-circle moment for faculty like Haney.

“Part of the responsibility that we imparted in our students from the outset is the concept of stewardship, which includes teaching future generations of physician leaders,” he said. “Dr. Kirkpatrick Schmutz is an exemplar of that effort toward stewardship, benefiting current and future students and setting an example for them to follow.”

Kirkpatrick Schmutz says teaching not only benefits doctors in training but also physicians and the organizations they work for.

“I think that being in an academic-like training environment keeps everybody at the top of their game and keeps patients getting the best care,” she said. “I’m excited to be challenged. I think they will teach me as much as I teach them, if not more, and I love that.”

MD alumni faculty

Christie Kirkpatrick Schmutz, MD, is one of several members of the Class of 2021 who jumped at the opportunity to give back to the College of Medicine as alumni faculty.

THE COLLEGE ALSO WELCOMES:



Brent Conrad, MD



Michaela Fallon, MD



Alex Franke, MD



Samuel Josephsen, MD



Auddri Rahman, MD



Kiah Sullivan, MD



Jamie Wiggin, MD

As of August 1, 2024



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Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine
412 E. Spokane Falls Blvd
Spokane, WA 99202-2131

