An aging physician workforce and patient population combined with increased access to medical insurance is spurring demand for physicians in primary care disciplines such as family medicine and internal medicine, especially in communities most underserved in Washington.

As part of a comprehensive initiative that includes channeling university resources and donor funds, Washington State University is requesting $10.8 million in the 2017-19 state operating budget to support 60 first year and 60 second year students for the community-based Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine.

Recently awarded preliminary accreditation, the College will offer Washington students a modern interprofessional medical education experience designed to prepare them to be leaders in innovative healthcare delivery in their home state. It will do so by drawing students from underserved communities and populations, providing two years of instruction at WSU’s Health Sciences campus in Spokane, and placing them in clinical settings in underserved areas throughout the state for third and fourth year clinical training.

STATEWIDE IMPACT
Two-thirds of Washington students who attend medical school leave the state to do so. The Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine will increase access for Washington students by expanding capacity and pursuing the creation of new Graduate Medical Education residencies.

Beginning with the creation of pipeline programs in schools, WSU will seek students from communities of under 25,000 in population, from populations most under represented in the field of medicine, and those who are first generation professional students.

As of mid-October, WSU had agreements with 19 healthcare organizations to place third and fourth year students and more partnerships are being developed. Most are with healthcare providers in the Spokane, Tri-Cities, Vancouver and Everett areas where WSU already provides academic instruction and student services. Other partners are also being signed to help the university extend its reach.

AN INNOVATIVE EXPERIENCE FOR MODERN HEALTHCARE DELIVERY
WSU students will benefit from personalized, state-of-the-art curriculum and be trained using the latest in healthcare delivery technologies. As future leaders of medical teams who deliver healthcare in areas challenged by a lack of services, graduates will earn certificates in leadership and will have lifelong access to a virtual medicine network of WSU clinicians to promote continuing education.

WSU’s curriculum will be one of the first in the country to incorporate precision medicine, training students to analyze hundreds of patient data points and genetic tendencies to drive better healthcare decisions. Service learning opportunities will give students a deeper understanding of population health issues.

AN EXPERIENCE THAT IS TRULY INTERPROFESSIONAL
More than $225 million in capital investment already has been made in WSU Health Sciences Spokane to create an ideal environment for interprofessional medical education. The campus also houses WSU’s colleges of Nursing and Pharmacy and is home to the new Spokane Teaching Health Clinic, where medical, nursing, pharmacy, speech and hearing, physical therapy and occupational therapy students will train together with medical residents providing patient care and clinical services.