WHEREAS, Washington State has a physician shortage in 35 of Washington State’s 39 counties that is being worsened by an aging workforce, an aging populace in need of care and the public’s newfound access to health insurance via the Affordable Care Act; and

WHEREAS, The negative societal impacts of the physician shortage in Washington State are heightened by a misdistribution of physicians such that 17 counties in Washington State have fewer than 10 doctors per 10,000 population; and

WHEREAS, The population and health care needs of Washington State has simply outgrown its ability to train new doctors, as two-thirds of Washingtonians who go to medical school leave the state to do so; and

WHEREAS, Washington State has 120 slots per year for publicly-funded undergraduate medical education and has over 400 slots available for graduate medical education(residency); and

WHEREAS, Washington State University has many decades of experience educating health science professionals, has designated WSU Spokane as its health sciences campus, and over the past two decades, has invested over $208 million in capital construction, including most recently the decision to build a Teaching Health Center, and has invested in more than 100 faculty positions on that campus; and

WHEREAS, Washington State University has been providing first-year medical education for over 40 years in partnership with the University of Washington School of Medicine’s remote-site medical education program for Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho (WWAMI); and
WHEREAS, Over that forty-year period, Washington State University has served as the University of Washington School of Medicine's largest medical education partner through the WWAMI remote-site medical education program, and since 2008, through WWAMI, has provided the medical education for a full third of the first-year medical students for Washington State; and

WHEREAS, A feasibility study commissioned by Washington State University has determined that a WSU College of Medicine could be established at reasonable cost to the state by leveraging both previous investments and by establishing a community-based medical school model; and

WHEREAS, The economic impact of medical schools in the state increases incrementally with additional medical schools, and as Washington State University is the state’s land-grant research institution, it has a unique public service responsibility to foster the state’s economic vitality through education and research;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the Washington State University Board of Regents direct university leadership to pursue approval for an independently accredited school of medicine while maintaining the university’s commitment to WWAMI as the program’s largest partner.

Chair of the Board of Regents

Secretary of the Board of Regents