



Navigating the Changing Landscape of Health Care in the Pacific Northwest

PULLMAN, Wash., June 17, 2025 – Washington State University’s Carson College of Business has released a comprehensive [report](#) providing insights into the current state of the health care economy in the Pacific Northwest. The findings examine the growing role of artificial intelligence (AI) in health care, as well as public perceptions around the affordability of senior living and ongoing staffing challenges.

Key findings include:

More than two-thirds (69%) of Pacific Northwest residents have heard about AI’s use in at least 1 in 10 possible applications of this technology.

- However, close to half (48%) of individuals don’t know if AI has been used for themselves or someone they know.
- More individuals believe using AI in health care is about making it more efficient, and therefore more profitable (36%), rather than about improving health outcomes for patients (12%).
- Residents are divided in their comfort with AI’s application in senior care: 42% are comfortable with AI use, while 46% find it concerning.

Sixty-five percent of respondents believe there is a caregiver shortage in their community, and 72% are concerned about their community’s ability to attract and retain qualified health care professionals.

- Nearly all respondents (95%) express concern over potential negative outcomes from staffing shortages, such as patient neglect and delays in routine care.
- Seventy-one percent of Pacific Northwest residents usually see the same provider for primary health care, but 18% see different providers.
- Among those who usually see different providers, 68% say they have been frustrated by the inability to receive consistent care from a single health care professional.

Affordability remains a top priority for residents considering senior care options, with 83% concerned about the costs associated with care as they age.

- Worries about cost (50%) and quality of care (48%) are mirrored in the top factors individuals would consider when deciding on senior-living arrangements.
- Nearly two-thirds (65%) would prefer to age in place, compared to 25% who prefer a senior-living community.
- However, despite the preference for aging in place, most would be willing to relocate a loved one (60%) or themselves (63%) to a different town, city or state for a better senior-living community or care.

"Understanding what's on the minds of consumers when it comes to senior living is critical, not just for health care organizations and policymakers but also for academic institutions like WSU," said Nancy Swanger, founding director of WSU's Granger Cobb Institute for Senior Living. "It informs how we prepare students for lasting, meaningful careers in this field. At the Granger Cobb Institute for Senior Living, we're focused on equipping future leaders with the insights and empathy they need to meet evolving consumer expectations and drive innovation in senior living."

For a more detailed look at the survey findings, read the full report [here](#).

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About the Survey

The survey was conducted online from April 28 to May 12, 2025, among 1,006 adults living in Washington, Oregon and Idaho. The survey sample is demographically representative of the population in the region on age, gender, state of residence, race, ethnicity and education; U.S. Census data were used as targets for setting sampling quotas on these variables.

About Carson College of Business

WSU's Carson College of Business is dedicated to advancing knowledge through research and education. With campuses across the state and international partnerships, the college is a leader in innovative business education and research.

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