



# human capital portfolio



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For the most current information on our strategy, please visit our website at [www.rwjf.org/humancapital](http://www.rwjf.org/humancapital).

People drive America's health care system. Progress comes not only from investment in new technology and other innovations, but also from investment in *people*—those who research, shape and deliver health and health care for all of us. That's why the Human Capital Portfolio of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) seeks out people whose work can improve health and health care, identifies those with the potential to transform our health care system, and provides them with the support that will help them realize their promise.

## THE PROBLEM

Multiple factors contribute to the challenges facing the nation's health and medical workforce. The emergence of new diseases, the threat of bioterrorism, and technological and scientific innovations demand that health workers continually adapt and update their skills. The population is aging, as is the health care workforce, setting the stage for shortages and a sweeping loss of experience in all health fields—particularly in nursing—as the baby boom generation retires over the next 20 years. The country's growing ethnic and racial diversity challenges health care providers to deliver more culturally competent care.

The health reform law is expected to give more than 30 million previously-uninsured Americans access to care, which will increase demand for primary care services that are already scarce in many areas. The health care system is struggling to eliminate disparities and reduce medical errors and to adopt best practices more consistently. The cost of care has skyrocketed, causing economic hardship for families, businesses and the nation and exposing a stark need for greater efficiency.

Thus, there is an urgent need to help today's workers develop new skills, while at the same time preparing a new generation of health and health care workers and leaders that reflects the complex tapestry that is the changing

face of America. These workers must be committed to addressing disparities in health outcomes and ready and able to deliver care that is patient-centered, safe, effective and efficient.

## OUR APPROACH

The investments of the Human Capital Portfolio are long-term, yielding results over decades and generations. Our approach is to identify talented individuals from diverse backgrounds and give them the tools and expertise to take a fresh approach to health issues and clinical practice, so they can become catalysts and creators of change.

Many of our programs are longstanding—some were launched when the Foundation first opened its doors—and have paid dividends in developing leaders with a strong commitment to improving health and health care and the skills to affect change. For example, along with deans of nursing and medical schools and top-level policy-makers in government, the 1,100 graduates of the *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholars* program include former U.S. Surgeons General as well as leaders in

philanthropy and other fields. Twenty-seven percent of people in a 2009 sample of top health and health care leadership positions are alumni of RWJF scholars, fellows or leadership programs. We also prime the pipeline to health careers, with our *Summer Medical and Dental Education Program*, which has provided entrée for more than 20,000 undergraduate college students from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds.

#### WHAT WE FUND

The programs of the Human Capital Portfolio:

- Create opportunities for collaborative and multidisciplinary approaches to solve health and health care challenges.
- Develop skills, offer resources and provide training to create effective leaders.
- Anticipate and fill gaps in the health workforce to meet future needs.
- Find and attract diverse individuals to pursue careers in health and health care.
- Support scholars conducting pioneering health research.

The Foundation recognizes that solutions to our nation's health care problems aren't the province of any single profession or type of experience, and that people with a wide range of expertise must work together if we are to achieve our goal to improve the health and health care of all Americans. The programs of the Human Capital Portfolio create opportunities for collaborative and multidisciplinary approaches among health professionals that will solve health and health care problems.

Our programs seek to ensure that our nation has enough well-prepared health professionals and frontline health workers, from a wide range of diverse backgrounds, to meet our current and future needs. We inspire and enable



promising young people to pursue careers in health and health care, and provide them with the skills needed to become tomorrow's health care leaders. We believe that attracting and preparing individuals from diverse backgrounds for these careers is an important step toward eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities and improving the nation's health.

Improving the nation's health also requires innovative, evidence-based insights that help people to make healthier choices. Our programs invest in a diverse range of scholars whose groundbreaking research helps lead to policies that improve health and health care for everyone. Some of these are creative leaders at the local level, who help the neediest in their communities, providing health care services to those who might otherwise go without. We also engage the alumni of RWJF scholars, fellows and leadership programs by creating opportunities for our "graduates" to share their insights and experience with others at the Foundation and throughout the country.

**Leadership Training.** We are working to create new methods of leadership development and mentoring. For example, the *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health Policy Fellowships* program allows midcareer health care practitioners to apply their skills to improving health policy by working

with the U.S. Congress. The *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Executive Nurse Fellows* program offers advanced leadership and mentoring to nurses in senior executive roles in health services, public health and nursing education who aspire to help lead and shape the U.S. health care system. The *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Community Health Leaders* program recognizes outstanding individuals who have made significant contributions to health in their communities; a new phase of the program encourages current and past awardees to work together to advance public policy in the health arena. And *Ladder to Leadership: Building the Next Generation of Community Health Leaders* prepares midcareer community health advocates for leadership, as the current generation of community health executives approaches retirement.

**Field Building.** The Foundation is also engaged in training and education aimed at building specific fields within health and health care. *Pipeline, Profession and Practice: Community-Based Dental Education* exposes dental students to the challenges and rewards of dental practice in poor and underserved communities—an experience that has led some to choose to work where their skills are needed most. The *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Scholars in Health Policy Research* program provides fellowships to creative thinkers in

economics, political science and sociology to pursue research in health policy. The *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health and Society Scholars* program focuses on building expertise to address the genetic, behavioral, environmental, economic and social factors that affect health.

**Quality.** Our *Interdisciplinary Nursing Quality Research Initiative* is filling gaps in knowledge about nurses' contribution to quality of care by supporting research to document the impact of nursing on health systems and patient outcomes. We are funding Quality and Safety Education in Nursing (QSEN) and plan to support other programs to spread knowledge of quality improvement methodologies across the health professions workforce.

**Diversity.** The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation supports efforts to promote diversity and cultural sensitivity at all levels of the health and health care workforce—among health leaders, managers and researchers as well as clinicians, support personnel and community health workers. For a quarter century, the *Harold Amos Medical Faculty Development Program* has supported scores of outstanding underrepresented minority physicians in their academic medical careers. *New Connections: Increasing Diversity of RWJF Programming* was created to bring diverse perspectives to RWJF grantmaking and to expand the contributions of junior researchers and senior consultants from historically underrepresented groups to Foundation programming. The new *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Center for Health Policy at the University of New Mexico* will help promising Hispanic and American Indian students and others from underrepresented or disadvantaged backgrounds to get the training and research opportunities they need to join discussions and debates about health policy. Made possible through a strategic

collaboration among Meharry Medical College, RWJF and Vanderbilt University College of Arts and Science, the *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Center for Health Policy at Meharry Medical College* is developing leaders from African American and other underrepresented communities to help shape the future of America's health and health care system.

**Frontline Workforce.** We recognize the importance of identifying pathways for frontline workers to build careers instead of getting stuck in dead-end jobs. To address this, a collaborative initiative between RWJF and the Hitachi Foundation, *Jobs to Careers: Promoting Work-Based Learning for Quality Care*, is establishing systems that train, develop, reward and advance current frontline health and health care workers to assure that patients and communities receive high-quality services.

**Solving the Nurse and Nurse Faculty Shortage.** More than 3 million strong, nurses represent the largest percentage of health care professionals. Their experience is crucial at the bedside in reducing medical errors, increasing the quality of cost-effective care and in providing primary care. Their experience is also crucial in leadership, helping shape patient-centered policy as our nation's health care system is reformed. The Foundation is committed to expanding the number of nurses, building their leadership capacity, sharpening their skills and the skills of their educators, and building awareness among policy-makers and citizens that a crisis lies ahead if we fail to boost the supply of well-educated nurses to meet care demands.

The *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Initiative on the Future of Nursing*, at the Institute of Medicine, is conducting a major study with the goal of producing a transformational report (due October 2010), with bold national

recommendations on the delivery of nursing services and on increasing the capacity of the nurse education system. The *Center to Champion Nursing in America*, a partnership between RWJF and AARP, amplifies and disseminates information about nursing issues and advocates for policy changes. The *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Nurse Faculty Scholars* program prepares junior nurse faculty members for academic leadership with intensive mentoring, research grants and other supports. The *New Jersey Nursing Initiative* provides accelerated education and clinical training for nurse faculty in New Jersey, using scholarships, simulation centers and collaborative support from nursing schools in the state. The *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation New Careers in Nursing* scholarships have enabled 1,400 students from underrepresented groups in nursing or disadvantaged backgrounds, who already have baccalaureate degrees in other disciplines, to enroll in accelerated baccalaureate or master's degree nursing programs while encouraging them to pursue careers as nurse faculty.

#### WHAT WE DON'T FUND

We do not accept unsolicited proposals. However, we expect to issue specific solicitations for proposals from time to time. If you are registered to receive content alerts through the Foundation's website at [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org), you will receive notices of funding opportunities through these alerts.

Further information about Human Capital initiatives is available at [www.rwjf.org/humancapital](http://www.rwjf.org/humancapital). For details on RWJF scholars, fellows and leadership opportunities, visit [RWJFleaders.org](http://RWJFleaders.org).



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