

NEWS RELEASE
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North Carolina is One of Nine States Selected for New Grant to Continue Building a More Highly Educated Nursing Workforce

Princeton, N.J.—The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) today announced that North Carolina has been chosen to receive a \$300,000, two-year grant in Phase II of its *Academic Progression in Nursing* program (APIN). APIN is advancing state and regional strategies aimed at creating a more highly educated, diverse nursing workforce. It is run by the American Organization of Nurse Executives (AONE) on behalf of the Tri-Council for Nursing, consisting of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the National League for Nursing, American Nurses Association, and AONE, which is leading the four-year initiative. “Action Coalitions” in all nine states that were part of Phase I of the program have met or exceeded their benchmarks, and are receiving funding to continue their work for two additional years. Funding from RWJF to the states over the four years will total \$5.4 million.

In addition to North Carolina, the states receiving Phase II APIN grants are California, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Montana, New Mexico, New York, Texas, and Washington states. The grants will allow them to continue working with academic institutions and employers to expand their work to help nurses in their states get higher degrees, so they can be essential partners in providing care and promoting health, as well as more easily continue their education and fill faculty and primary care nurse practitioner roles. The Action Coalitions in all these states have been encouraging strong partnerships between community colleges and universities to make it easier for nurses to transition to higher degrees.

The Action Coalition in North Carolina will continue to emphasize academic progression strategies to increase the educational preparation and diversity of North Carolina’s nursing workforce as well as to better equip nurses to lead in health care reform. “North Carolina is making great progress in creating more seamless pathways and academic partnerships for nurses to achieve the higher level of educational preparation required to effectively prepare our future nursing workforce,” said Polly Johnson, CEO of the Foundation for Nursing Excellence and Co-Lead of the NC Future of Nursing Action Coalition. “Generous continuing funding from The

Duke Endowment and the NC Area Health Education Centers, along with the APIN grant from RWJF, will support both expansion and sustainability of our academic progression initiatives.”

In its groundbreaking 2010 report, [*The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*](#), the Institute of Medicine (IOM) recommended that 80 percent of the nursing workforce be prepared at the baccalaureate level or higher by the year 2020. At present, about half of nurses in the United States have baccalaureate or higher degrees. While acknowledging the contributions of Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses and associate-degree-prepared Registered Nurses, the IOM report said a better educated nursing workforce can help ensure that our nation’s population has access to high-quality, patient- and family-centered care and can meet the growing need to provide preventive care in schools, communities, and homes.

“The APIN teams have been making great progress developing initiatives and curricula that are encouraging and making it easier for more nurses to earn their BSN degrees,” said Pamela Austin Thompson, MS, RN, CENP, FAAN, national program director for APIN, chief executive officer of AONE, and senior vice president for nursing at the American Hospital Association. “We know that the nation needs a well-educated nursing workforce to ensure an adequate supply of public health and primary care providers, improve care for patients living with chronic illness, and in other ways meet the needs of our aging and increasingly diverse population. The strategies these nine states are implementing, and the models they are developing for other states to replicate, will help us meet the IOM’s target for BSN and higher prepared nurses.”

As part of Phase II of this work, each state Action Coalition will develop a sustainability plan to ensure that the work to promote seamless academic progression for nurses in their states will continue beyond the grant period. During Phase II, each state also will develop a robust diversity plan and focus on academic-practice partnerships to expand and support the work to date.

RWJF is also helping advance recommendations in the IOM report by supporting the [*Future of Nursing: Campaign for Action*](#)—a collaborative effort to advance solutions to challenges facing the nursing profession in order to improve quality and transform the way Americans receive health care. It is coordinated through the *Center to Champion Nursing in America*, an initiative of AARP, the AARP Foundation, and RWJF. It supports state-based Action Coalitions in all 50 states and the District of Columbia; Action Coalitions are leading the APIN work in each of the nine funded states.

“Advancing a more highly educated, diverse workforce where nurses are able to practice to the top of their education and training is essential to achieving the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s mission to advance a culture of health in our nation,” said RWJF Senior Adviser for Nursing Susan B. Hassmiller, PhD, RN, FAAN. “In the last two years, APIN grantees have laid important groundwork to build that workforce. We are pleased to provide the financial support they need to continue their essential work.”

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About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

For more than 40 years the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has worked to improve the health and health care of all Americans. We are striving to build a national Culture of Health that will enable all Americans to live longer, healthier lives now and for generations to come. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org. Follow the Foundation on Twitter at www.rwjf.org/twitter or on Facebook at www.rwjf.org/facebook .

About the Tri-Council for Nursing

The Tri-Council for Nursing is an alliance of four autonomous nursing organizations each focused on leadership for education, practice and research. The four organizations are the: American Association of Colleges of Nursing; American Nurses Association; American Organization of Nurse Executives; and the National League for Nursing. While each organization has its own constituent membership and unique mission, they are united by common values and convene regularly for the purpose of dialogue and consensus building, to provide stewardship within the profession of nursing. These organizations represent nurses in practice, nurse executives and nursing educators. The Tri-Council's diverse interests encompass the nursing work environment, health care legislation and policy, quality of health care, nursing education, practice, research and leadership across all segments of the health delivery system.

About the North Carolina Future of Nursing Campaign for Action

The Future of Nursing: Campaign for Action envisions a health care system where all Americans have access to high-quality care, with nurses contributing to the full extent of their capabilities. The campaign is coordinated through the Center to Champion Nursing in America, an initiative of AARP, the AARP Foundation, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and includes 50 state Action Coalitions plus the District of Columbia and a wide range of health care providers, consumer advocates, policy-makers and the business, academic and philanthropic communities. For more information about the Campaign for Action go to www.thefutureofnursing.org.