

For Immediate Release

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Partners with AACN to Launch New Careers in Nursing Scholarship Program

Groundbreaking Program Addresses the Nursing Shortage By Supporting 1500 New Students in Accelerated Nursing Programs

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 22, 2008 – The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) announced today the creation of the RWJF New Careers in Nursing Scholarship Program, designed to alleviate the nation's nursing shortage by dramatically expanding the pipeline of students in accelerated nursing programs. Scholarships in the amount of \$10,000 each will be awarded to 1500 entry-level nursing students over the next three years. Preference will be given to students from groups underrepresented in nursing or from a disadvantaged background.

"The size and scope of this scholarship program is truly unprecedented in nursing," said AACN President Fay Raines. "We applaud the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for making this generous commitment to supporting professional nursing education programs and for taking a decisive step toward alleviating this nation's shortage of registered nurses."

Through the RWJF New Careers in Nursing Scholarship Program, funding will be available to schools of nursing with entry-level accelerated programs at the baccalaureate and/or master's level(s). Schools must use funding to increase the number of students enrolled in accelerated programs and to enhance efforts to recruit students from groups underrepresented in nursing or disadvantaged backgrounds. Preference will be given to schools which show how funding can be used to help leverage new faculty resources. All applicants must specify the mentoring and leadership development resources that will be available to ensure successful completion of the nursing program by accelerated students.

The program will target many of the issues currently confronting professional nursing education, including providing support for students in accelerated nursing programs. Accelerated programs offer the most efficient route to licensure as a registered nurse for adults who have already completed a baccalaureate or graduate degree in a discipline other than nursing. Although enrollment in these programs has steadily increased over the past few years, many potential students are unable to apply since already having a college degree disqualifies them for most federal financial aid programs for entry-level students.

The RWJF New Careers in Nursing Scholarship Program will provide much needed support for this student population while quickly boosting the nation's supply of registered nurses. For more information on accelerated nursing programs, see <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Media/FactSheets/AcceleratedProg.htm>.

By bringing more nurses into the profession at the baccalaureate and master's degree levels, the new scholarship programs also helps to address the nation's nurse faculty shortage. Data from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration show that nurses entering the profession at the baccalaureate level are four times more likely than other nurses to pursue a graduate degree in nursing, which is the required credential to teach. "Besides preparing nurses with the highest level of entry-level preparation possible, the New Careers in Nursing Scholarship Program will also address one of the root causes of the overarching nursing shortage," added Dr. Raines. "This is truly a win-win situation for the nursing profession and for patients who deserve the best care possible."

Furthermore the program targets the need to recruit students from groups underrepresented in nursing or disadvantaged backgrounds. According to the National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice, diversifying the nursing profession is essential to meeting the health care needs of the nation and reducing health disparities that exist among many underserved populations.

AACN will serve as the National Program Office for this RWJF-funded initiative and will oversee the grant application submission and review processes. A National Advisory Committee (NAC) composed of experts from nursing, healthcare, and the academic arenas will conduct the individual proposal reviews. For more information, see <http://www.newcareersinnursing.org>.

Schools of nursing interested in applying for a scholarship are invited to review the Call for Proposals (CFP) found online at <http://www.rwjf.org/applications/solicited/cfp.jsp?ID=20301>. All proposals must be submitted electronically through RWJF's Grantmaking Online system and will be accepted through June 26, 2008. Two Web conferences are scheduled for May 6, 2008 and June 10, 2008 to provide guidance to applicants as well as a forum to ask questions. For more information about the CFP or the applicant Web conferences, contact the National Program Office at ncin@aacn.nche.edu or 202-463-6930, extension 232.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful, and timely change. For more than 35 years the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. Helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in our lifetime. www.rwjf.org

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) is the national voice for university and four-year college education programs in nursing. Representing more than 620 member schools of nursing at public and private institutions nationwide, AACN's educational, research, governmental advocacy, data collection, publications, and other programs work to establish quality standards for bachelor's- and graduate-degree nursing education, assist deans and directors to implement those standards, influence the nursing profession to improve health care, and promote public support of baccalaureate and graduate nursing education, research, and practice. www.aacn.nche.edu

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