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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Researchers to Examine Organization, Finance, Delivery of Public Health Services and Subsequent Impact on the Public's Health**

**October 15, 2013, Washington, DC:** In the current era of health reform, public health transformation, and diminishing resources, practitioners and policy-makers need sound evidence on the most efficient and impactful approaches for improving population health. To this end, a new round of research will focus on the organization, financing, delivery, and quality of public health services within communities and on the impact of these services on the public's health. The 11 new research awards, totaling \$2.7 million, are being facilitated by the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI), with guidance from the National Coordinating Center for Public Health Services and Systems Research (NCC) housed at the University of Kentucky College of Public Health. Support for this research was provided by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

"In this era of health reform, it is imperative that we not forget that public health holds a key to improving the population's health, a major tenant of Affordable Care Act," said Douglas Scutchfield, MD, co-principal investigator of the NCC. "These grants will help us use research to further the efforts to develop public health's capacity to perform in this changing health care environment."

New this year, the NNPHI-managed solicitation included two categories of funding: (1) short-term studies of up to \$200,000 each for a maximum of 24 months that focus on understanding how elements of the public health system influence public health practice and policy, and (2) complex and comprehensive studies of up to \$450,000 each for a maximum of 36 months that focus on comparative effectiveness by testing the impacts of alternative strategies for delivering public health services.

Recipients of the awards and their projects are (in alphabetical order, with 36-month awards indicated by an \*):

- **Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, Susan J Zahner and Kusuma Madamala**  
Goal: Examine the performance of cross-jurisdictional sharing arrangements in Wisconsin and document changes from baseline to inform guidance on the use of shared service agreements for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of local public health services.
- **Boston Public Health Commission, Megan T Sandel and Margaret Reid**  
Goal: Examine the effectiveness of a pediatric asthma partnership for both reducing asthma triggers in the home and improving quality of life, as well as identifying barriers to program operation and establishing metrics for program effectiveness using quantitative and qualitative methods.
- **Indiana University, Brian Dixon**  
Goal: Use integrated electronic health record and community information system data to generate Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS)-like population health indicators at various smaller-than-county geographic levels to provide insights for improving community assessment.

- **Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stan N Finkelstein and Richard C Larson**  
Goal: Develop a tool to better enable public health and emergency preparedness officials to identify the source of large-scale, multi-state outbreaks of foodborne illness and to project plausible future outbreaks.
- **Medical College of Wisconsin, Inc, Laura D Cassidy**  
Goal: Evaluate the leadership styles of local health department directors to identify optimal strategies for minimizing the negative impacts of resource reductions on the service provided to their communities.
- **Michigan Public Health Institute, Julia Heany**  
Goal: Perform an in-depth examination of a tribal public health system's capacity to deliver the Ten Essential Services.
- **Minnesota Department of Health, Elizabeth Gyllstrom and Kevin Peterson \***  
Goal: Examine variation in the degree of primary care and public health integration across local jurisdictions, identify factors that may contribute to or impede integration, and assess whether areas of increased integration have better health outcomes.
- **Temple University, Jennifer K Ibrahim**  
Goal: Create and evaluate an online database of public health laws in Nebraska to help practitioners systematically advance the use of law in service delivery.
- **University of Maryland, Ritu Agarwal and Robert Gold**  
Goal: Develop and validate an evidence-based public health information technology (PHIT) maturity index to guide improvements in the usefulness, efficiency and outcomes of technology-mediated strategies for public health and clinical care program integration.
- **University of Missouri, Eduardo J Simoes and Katherine A Stamatakis**  
Goal: Characterize public health and health care collaborations across the US with a focus on joint community health assessment (CHA) as an entry point for improving cross-sector collaborations in obesity and chronic disease prevention.
- **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Noel T Brewer and Melissa B Gilkey \*** Goal: Evaluate the effectiveness of an academic detailing model to facilitate health care providers' adoption of best practices related to adolescent immunization.

Research findings resulting from these awards will provide relevant information to public health practitioners and policy-makers, contributing evidence that is urgently needed to improve quality, efficiency, and equity in public health practice with an ultimate goal of improving population health nationwide.

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#### **About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**

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 health and health care, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, measurable and timely change. For 40 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. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit <http://www.rwjf.org>. Follow the Foundation on Twitter at <http://www.rwjf.org/twitter> or Facebook at <http://www.rwjf.org/facebook>.

### **About the National Coordinating Center for Public Health Services and Systems Research**

The goal of the National Coordinating Center is to grow the field of PHSSR by coordinating current PHSSR investments, supporting real-world applications, and strengthening the capacity of researchers and practitioners. The Center also works to determine the future direction of the field's research initiatives; translate that research into practice; increase the visibility of the work; and attract other funders to the field. For more information, visit [www.publichealthsystems.org](http://www.publichealthsystems.org).

### **About the National Network of Public Health Institutes**

Created in 2001 as a forum for public health institutes (PHIs), today NNPHI convenes its members and partners at the local, state, and national levels in efforts to address critical health issues. NNPHI's mission is to support national public health system initiatives and strengthen PHIs to promote multi-sector activities resulting in measurable improvements of public health structures, systems, and outcomes. Since 2009, NNPHI has provided support for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Public Health Services and Systems Research (PHSSR) program. In this role, NNPHI facilitates an annual PHSSR call for proposals, provides technical assistance to applicants and grantees, and coordinates grants management. Learn more at [www.nnphi.org/re](http://www.nnphi.org/re). Follow NNPHI on Twitter at [https://twitter.com/NNPHI\\_ORG](https://twitter.com/NNPHI_ORG).