

40 YEARS OF IMPROVING HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

## Robert Wood Johnson Foundation **Health & Society Scholars**



**2013–2014 Call for Applications**

**Application Deadline**

September 20, 2013

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## Program Overview

(For complete details, refer to specific pages noted below.)

### Purpose

The *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars* program provides two years of support to postdoctoral scholars at all stages of their careers to build the nation's capacity for research and leadership to address the multiple determinants of population health and contribute to policy change. The program is based on the principle that progress in the field of population health depends upon collaboration and exchange across disciplines and sectors. Its goal is to improve health by training scholars to:

1. investigate the connections among biological, genetic, behavioral, environmental, economic, and social determinants of health; and
2. develop, evaluate and disseminate knowledge, interventions, and policies that integrate and act on these determinants to improve health.

### Total Awards

Up to 12 scholars will be selected for two-year appointments beginning in the fall of 2014. Scholars will receive an annual stipend of \$80,000.

### Eligibility Criteria (page 6)

To be eligible, scholars must:

- have completed doctoral training by the time of entry into the program (September 2014) in one of a variety of fields, including, but not limited to, the behavioral and social sciences; the biological and natural sciences; health professions; public policy; public health; history; demography; environmental sciences; urban planning; and engineering;
- have significant research experience;
- connect their research interests to substantive population health concerns; and
- be U.S. Citizens or Permanent Resident Green Card Holders at the time of application and must not be receiving support from other research fellowships/traineeships at the time they begin the program.

### Selection Criteria

We will evaluate applicants based on the criteria listed on page 7.

### Key Dates and Deadlines (see Timetable)

- **September 20, 2013 (5 p.m. ET)**—Deadline for receipt of applications and references.
- **January 2014**—Finalist interviews.
- **Mid-to-late February 2014**—Notification of acceptance.
- **September 2014**—Scholars enter the program at participating universities.

### How to Apply (page 8)

Individuals may apply only online through the program's website. Additional information and instructions may be obtained by contacting:

Gerard P. Lebeda, deputy director

Phone: (212) 419-3566

Email: [hss@nyam.org](mailto:hss@nyam.org)

[www.healthandsocietyscholars.org](http://www.healthandsocietyscholars.org)

## The Program

Although the United States spends more for medical care than any other country, our nation ranks poorly on many indicators of health and well-being. Studies comparing the health status of different population groups within the United States repeatedly demonstrate marked disparities in health and disease patterns associated with social, economic, and environmental conditions. There is growing recognition that decisions made outside the traditional health sphere can powerfully affect the health of populations.

The *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars* program seeks to improve the nation's health by addressing the full spectrum of factors that affect health and creating the evidence to inform policy in multiple sectors that can promote health. The program trains scholars to investigate the effects of contextual factors on behavior and biology in order to strengthen the knowledge base supporting population-wide interventions.

There are new sources of funding to support such work and a growing job market among government agencies, universities, and public health organizations for individuals capable of leading and participating in research, policy, and practice that crosses disciplines and sectors of society to improve population health. However, experts with such knowledge and skills are in critically short supply. The *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars* program is designed to fill the void.

## About the Cover

Dorothy Daley, an alumnus of the *RWJF Health & Society Scholars* program (2003–2005), discusses her current research project with fellow alumnus, Carmen Mandic (2008–2010), during an Alumni Poster Session at the 2012 Annual Program Meeting in Princeton, N.J.

Photo: Courtesy of Amy Hart

## Background

The *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars* program enhances and broadens the intellectual perspectives that scholars bring from their original disciplines. Each year, the program enables up to 12 individuals who have completed their doctoral training and produced outstanding work to engage in an intensive two-year program at one of four nationally prominent universities. Training activities at the participating universities are intentionally flexible to meet the diverse backgrounds, interests, and needs of individual scholars. Specific offerings vary by site, but include two years of intensive seminars, scholar-directed research, and analysis conducted with the guidance or collaboration of distinguished faculty mentors and focused training in the skills necessary for effective leadership, program implementation, and policy change. It is anticipated that academic, government and other employers involved in policy-making will seek out program graduates for leadership positions.

The curriculum will foster cross-disciplinary thinking and dialogue, as scholars and faculty from different disciplines explore contributing risk factors; interactions among contextual forces; behavioral predispositions; biological susceptibility; developmental timing and influences; and approaches to intervention. The program thus expands the intellectual scope, collaborative competence, shared language, and scientific creativity of both scholars and faculty.

Scholars become familiar with various means of assessing the broad range of factors that influence health, as well as measurement issues related to population health. Scholars study interactions among context, behavior and biology across the life span, and learn to think creatively about the intersections among different disciplines by considering dynamic time processes, inference and causality, and multilevel analytic techniques. Scholars will learn about various approaches to program design, implementation and evaluation; the effective communication of

knowledge to decision-makers and opinion leaders in multiple sectors; models of behavior change; methods of determining cost-effectiveness; and the evaluation of complex multilevel interventions.

Scholars are expected to concentrate their intellectual energies on program-related activities and research. They should not pursue other degrees during the program period, and the *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars* program will not provide tuition support for any degree program. Scholars must be in residence at the site throughout the program period.

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## **Participating Universities**

The four universities in this program were selected because of their outstanding talent in specific disciplines; their commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration; the breadth and depth of their research opportunities; and the presence of faculty leaders in population health. These institutions have demonstrated an ability to conceptualize and investigate the full range of determinants of health. The sites share their training and research resources for the benefit of scholars and faculty at all sites.

Participating universities and program directors are:

### **Columbia University**

Peter Bearman, PhD  
Bruce G. Link, PhD  
Kathryn Neckerman, PhD  
Julien Teitler, PhD  
Email: [kmn2@columbia.edu](mailto:kmn2@columbia.edu)

### **Harvard University**

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## University of California, San Francisco and Berkeley

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Ralph Catalano, PhD  
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## University of Wisconsin

David A. Kindig, MD, PhD  
John Mullahy, PhD  
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### Eligibility Criteria

- Individuals who have completed their doctoral training by the time of entry into the program (September 2014) in one of a variety of fields, including, but not limited to: behavioral and social sciences; biological and natural sciences; health professions; public policy; public health; history; demography; environmental sciences; urban planning; and engineering.
- Applicants are expected to have significant research experience. Past training in health-related areas is not a requirement, but applicants must clearly connect their research interests to substantive population health concerns.
- Individual candidates for receipt of award funds must be U.S. Citizens or Permanent Resident Green Card Holders at the time of application and must not be receiving support from other research fellowships/traineeships at the time they begin the program.
- Additionally, individual candidates for receipt of award funds cannot be related by blood or marriage to any Officer\* or Trustee of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, or be a descendant of its founder, Robert Wood Johnson.

\* *The Officers are the Chairman of the Board of Trustees; President and CEO; Chief of Staff; General Counsel; Secretary; Assistant Secretary; Treasurer; and Assistant Treasurer of the Foundation.*

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**Diversity Statement**

Consistent with RWJF values, this program embraces diversity and inclusion across multiple dimensions such as academic discipline, race, ethnicity, gender, age, and disadvantaged socioeconomic status. RWJF strongly encourages applications from individual candidates who will help us expand the perspectives and experiences we bring to our work. RWJF believes that the more we include diverse perspectives and experiences in our work, the better we are able to help all Americans live healthier lives and get the care they need.

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**Selection Criteria**

We will consider the following criteria in evaluating applicants:

- Potential to contribute creatively to the field of population health.
- Demonstrated openness to new ideas.
- Demonstrated critical thinking skills.
- A strong interest in interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Commitment to a career consistent with the program's purpose and goals.
- Quality of past research.
- Leadership potential.
- Ability to take advantage of the program's opportunities.
- Recommendations by faculty and other individuals with whom the applicant has studied or worked.

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**Use of Grant Funds**

Grants have been made to the four participating universities in accordance with RWJF's regular funding guidelines. Scholars will have access to a full range of university resources and will receive an annual stipend of \$80,000, plus health insurance from their university site. Scholars will also have access at each university to financial support for research-related expenses, training, workshops, and travel to professional meetings.

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## How to Apply

Individuals may apply only through our online system, which will be available through the program's website at [www.healthandsocietyscholars.org](http://www.healthandsocietyscholars.org) beginning July 17, 2013.

Applications to the *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars* program will be reviewed by the national advisory committee (NAC), national program office (NPO) and program site directors. Approximately 50 finalists will be selected for interviews at one or more of the participating sites. After these interviews, up to 12 scholars will be selected to enter the program in September 2014. Assignment to sites will be based upon a review of selected scholars' preferences for sites and the sites' preferences for specific scholars. Neither the NPO nor RWJF provides individual critiques of applications submitted.

For information and answers to frequently asked questions, please visit the program's website at [www.healthandsocietyscholars.org](http://www.healthandsocietyscholars.org) or contact:

Gerard P. Lebeda, *deputy director*  
Phone: (212) 419-3566  
Email: [hss@nyam.org](mailto:hss@nyam.org)

## Program Direction

The New York Academy of Medicine, which serves as the NPO, provides direction and technical assistance for the *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars* program.

The New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM) advances the health of people in cities.

An independent organization since 1847, NYAM addresses the health challenges facing the world's urban populations through interdisciplinary approaches to policy leadership, education, community engagement, and innovative research. Drawing on the expertise of diverse partners worldwide and more than 2,000 elected fellows from across the professions, our current priorities are to create environments in cities that support healthy aging; to strengthen systems that prevent disease and promote the public's health; and to implement interventions that eliminate health disparities.

The New York Academy of Medicine  
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Website: [www.healthandsocietyscholars.org](http://www.healthandsocietyscholars.org)

Responsible staff members at the NPO are:

- Jo Ivey Boufford, MD, *national program director*
- Christine A. Bachrach, PhD, *national program director*
- Gerard P. Lebeda, *deputy director*
- Jeffrey Price, *program manager*

Responsible staff members at RWJF are:

- Pamela G. Russo, MD, MPH, *senior program officer*
- Nancy Fishman, BSN, MPH, *senior program officer and interim team director*
- Lois Shevlin, *program financial analyst*

The NPO provides technical assistance and direction to the sites, monitors site performance and program progress, manages the annual scholar recruitment and selection process, organizes the program's annual meetings, and convenes a NAC.

The NAC, which consists of distinguished representatives from academia, government agencies and public policy, guides program policy, reviews scholar applications, participates in annual meetings, and assists in monitoring site performance.

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**National Advisory  
Committee**

**Jonathan M. Samet, MD, MS, *chair***  
Professor and Flora L. Thornton Chair  
Department of Preventive Medicine  
Director, Institute for Global Health  
Keck School of Medicine  
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Democratic Chief Public Health Counsel  
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Max and Minnie Tomerlin Voelcker Endowed Chair  
in Cancer Health Care Disparities  
The University of Texas Health Science Center at  
San Antonio  
San Antonio, TX

**David T. Takeuchi, PhD**

Professor and Katherine Hall Chambers Scholar  
School of Social Work and Department of Sociology  
University of Washington  
Seattle, WA



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## Timetable

A new call for applications for the *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholars* program is issued each year. The schedule for 2013–2014 is:

■ **July 17, 2013**

Online application system becomes available at [www.healthandsocietyscholars.org](http://www.healthandsocietyscholars.org).

■ **September 20, 2013 (5 p.m. ET)**

Deadline for receipt of online applications and references.

■ **January 2014**

Finalist Interviews.

■ **Mid-to-late February 2014**

Notification of acceptance.

■ **September 2014**

Scholars enter the program at participating universities.

## 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 [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org).

Follow the Foundation on Twitter at [www.rwjf.org/twitter](http://www.rwjf.org/twitter) or on Facebook at [www.rwjf.org/facebook](http://www.rwjf.org/facebook).

Sign up to receive email alerts on upcoming calls for proposals at <http://my.rwjf.org>.



Robert Wood Johnson  
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