



## Executive Summary

### Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Scholars in Health Policy Research

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) established the *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Scholars in Health Policy Research* program in 1991 to produce the next generation of creative thinkers and problem solvers in health policy by attracting talented new economists, political scientists, and sociologists to the field of health policy research.

Under the program, recent graduates of doctoral programs in the three disciplines receive stipends to study and conduct research for two years at Harvard University, the University of California at Berkeley/San Francisco, or the University of Michigan.

The program has produced 200 Scholars to date. Most of them hold academic positions and virtually all of them are still engaged in health policy research. More than two dozen have served on scientific advisory panels or been appointed to key policy-making positions at federal agencies.

Alan B. Cohen, ScD, professor of health policy and management at Boston University and director of its Health Policy Institute, has directed the program since its inception.

Total authorizations by the RWJF Board of Trustees from inception in 1991 through July 2012 are \$84.1 million.

[Read the full report.](#)  
[Learn more about the program here.](#)

## CONTEXT

Public interest in health policy has intensified dramatically in recent decades as concerns about the nation's health and the health care system have grown. The Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA) promises to reshape American health care. Yet, despite passage of this sweeping legislation, formidable challenges remain, and health care debates today are as likely to be concerned with defining the best health policies as they are with providing the best health care services.

Breakthroughs in medical science and technology have prompted enormous improvements in the country's capacity to treat illness. But as the nation struggles with how best to assure access, quality, equity, and efficiency in health care, policy-makers and others often turn to the field of health policy research for guidance and direction.

Investigators from the disciplines of economics, political science, and sociology use conceptual frameworks that are central to understanding health and health care. The interplay among experts in these fields can result in a rich perspective that enhances the way issues are framed and addressed.

## THE PROGRAM

The overarching goal of the *RWJF Scholars in Health Policy Research* program is to produce the next generation of creative thinkers and problem solvers in health policy by attracting talented economists, political scientists, and sociologists to the field of health policy research.

Recent graduates of doctoral programs in these disciplines receive stipends to study and conduct health policy research for two years at Harvard University, the University of California at its Berkeley and San Francisco campuses, or the University of Michigan. The program currently selects nine Scholars each year, placing three at each university. During this time, they:

- Learn about health, the health care system, and health policy
- Gain insights into the perspectives and methods of other social science disciplines, medicine, and public health
- Conduct relevant research and analysis

## OVERALL PROGRAM RESULTS

The program has produced a generation of 200 Scholars, most of whom are in academic positions and virtually all of whom are engaged in health policy research.

Collectively these Scholars have:

- Published 39 books, 167 book chapters, and 915 peer-reviewed journal articles about health policy or health. Some 68 of these authors have been cited in the literature at least 75 times.
- Taught 108 courses in health policy
- Held 149 editorial affiliations with 101 different journals
- Held senior policy-making positions at federal agencies including the President’s Council of Economic Advisers and the U.S. Department of the Treasury

## GOING FORWARD

RWJF reauthorized the program in May 2012 for three years.

In May 2012, RWJF decided to move the management of its long-standing *Investigator Awards in Health Policy Research* program (see [Program Results](#)) from Rutgers University to Boston University in 2013. Cohen will direct both programs, which will operate independently while benefitting from new opportunities to share and collaborate. “We can offer more activities for both programs, which would not be feasible with separate national program offices,” says Cohen. “We will build an integrated, joint alumni mentoring network and will also expand alumni networking opportunities.”

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### Program Management

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