



Executive Summary

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Investigator Awards in Health Policy Research

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Investigator Awards in Health Policy Research aims to build the health policy field by supporting innovative projects unlikely to receive funding elsewhere. Since 1993, the program has challenged researchers from sociology, history, political science, biomedicine, law, and other arenas to think creatively about the most important problems affecting American health and health care, and to develop the foundations of future health policy. The program has awarded more than \$56 million to 224 investigators working on 175 projects, as of the end of 2012.

This report covers the program from its inception through 2012, after which it moved from Rutgers to Boston University. Future updates will describe the program as it operates at its new site.

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

CONTEXT

Since its earliest days, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) has sought to foster the capacity of social scientists to analyze health policy. In particular, the Foundation aimed to attract scholars into health policy from the social sciences, including economics, sociology, and political science, because Foundation program staff considered those disciplines essential to understanding the health sector and its challenges.

The *RWJF Investigator Awards in Health Policy Research* is part of the Foundation's Human Capital Portfolio, which works to attract, develop, and retain high-quality leaders

and professionals in health and health care. See the [Human Capital Portfolio](#) for other programs.

THE PROGRAM

The *Investigator Awards* program uses a competitive application process to fund a diverse mix of investigators who:

- Apply new perspectives from a variety of disciplines to analyze the organization, delivery, and financing of health care services, the health care workforce, and public health challenges
- Explore the underlying values, historical evolution, and interplay among social, economic, and political forces shaping health, health care, and health policy in the United States

The program originally funded 10 to 15 investigators each year, but in 2010 began funding eight investigators every other year. Grants range up to \$335,000 over two to four years.

The Association for Health Services Research managed the program until 2001. From 2001 through 2012, the Institute for Health, Health Care Policy, and Aging Research at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, N.J. housed the program, which David Mechanic, PhD, directed. In January 2013, the program moved to Boston University's School of Management, where its director is Alan B. Cohen, ScD, who also directs *RWJF's Scholars in Health Policy Research*, in order to create greater synergy between the two programs and obtain economies of scale.

KEY RESULTS

- As of August 2013, Investigators have published 91 books, 173 book chapters, and 965 articles in more than 150 journals (see the Investigators Bibliography in the [Program Results Report](#) for publications between 2011 and the present). For example, **David Blumenthal, MD**, and **James A. Morone, PhD**, produced *The Heart of Power: Health and Politics in the Oval Office*. Blumenthal served as national coordinator for health information technology from 2009 to 2011 and in 2012 became president of a private philanthropy, the Commonwealth Fund, in New York City. See a [Profile](#) on Blumenthal and a [Profile](#) on Morone.
- Investigators have shed light on longstanding health challenges, such as the social determinants of health, the impact of firearms on public health, the organization of physician practices on the quality of medical care, and hospital nurse staffing levels on patient outcomes.

- Investigators have influenced health care reform. For example, in her dissenting opinion asserting that the Supreme Court should have upheld the Affordable Care Act in its entirety, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg cited the work of investigators **Theda Skocpol, PhD; Mark Hall, JD; and Andrea Campbell, PhD.**
- Numerous investigators have received outside awards for work pursued under the program. For example, many have won Distinguished Investigator Awards from AcademyHealth, and more than 40 have been elected to the Institute of Medicine.

See the program [website](#) for information on investigators and their projects; in the [Program Results Report](#), see the Project List for links to reports on a selection of research projects and the Profile List for more profiles of investigators.

GOING FORWARD

In July 2012, RWJF reauthorized the *Investigator Awards* through August 2014. The national program office will announce the next group of investigators in December 2013.

According to Lori A. Melichar, PhD, RWJF senior program officer, the Human Capital team wants to attract investigators from “an even broader range of disciplines” in the future, including architecture, engineering, and pharmacy. The team and program staff also plan to expand cross-scholar and cross-program collaboration.

Program Management

National Program Office: Boston University School of Management

Program Director: Alan B. Cohen
