



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Interdisciplinary Nursing Quality Research Initiative



2007 Call for Proposals—Round 3

Brief Proposal Deadline

December 12, 2007

Program Overview

Purpose

The *Interdisciplinary Nursing Quality Research Initiative* (INQRI) generates, disseminates and translates research to improve the quality of patient care, by supporting interdisciplinary teams of scholars from nursing and other disciplines to address gaps in knowledge about the relationship between nursing and health care quality.

Eligibility Criteria (page 7)

Only interdisciplinary teams with at least one scholar from nursing and at least one scholar from one other discipline are eligible to apply. Preference will be given to applicant organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and are not private foundations as defined under Section 509(a). The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation awards grants to organizations in the United States and its territories only.

Selection Criteria (page 8)

Complete selection criteria can be found on page 8.

Total Awards

- In round three approximately seven two-year grants of up to \$300,000 each will be awarded in 2008.

Key Dates and Deadlines

- **December 12, 2007 (3 p.m. ET)**—Deadline for receipt of brief proposals.
- **April 10, 2008 (3 p.m. ET)**—Deadline for receipt of full proposals.
- **July 16–17, 2008**—INQRI Annual Meeting (Attendance Required). Each selected project team must be represented at the meeting by the *project director* as well as one other scholar. One must be a nursing scholar, and the other a scholar from another discipline.

How to Apply (page 11)

This program only accepts proposals submitted through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system. For questions about the program or proposal process please contact:

INQRI Helpdesk
Phone: (800) 978-8309
E-mail: INQRIhelpdesk@constellagroup.com

www.inqri.org

Background

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) has long been committed to improving the quality of health and health care for all Americans. Nurses bear tremendous responsibility for the delivery of safe, high-quality patient care. Although there is anecdotal evidence of the impact of nursing care on patient outcomes, and research indicates a correlation between the two, there is limited rigorous research demonstrating causal relationships between nursing care and the quality of patient outcomes. Building and sharing such evidence is central to RWJF's nursing and quality objectives. We aim to reduce the national shortage in nurse staffing and improve overall health care quality as a result.

RWJF's *Interdisciplinary Nursing Quality Research Initiative* (INQRI), a \$10-million, five-year program, was created to generate, disseminate and translate knowledge related to nursing's contribution to improving the quality of patient care.

This third round of the program seeks proposals that build a strong evidence base documenting the relationship between nursing care and patient outcomes.

The Program

Goals

The primary goal of INQRI is to generate, disseminate and translate research to understand how nurses contribute to and can improve the quality of care. Areas to be addressed include:

- the impact of nursing care processes, the nursing workforce and environment, and nursing-led innovation on the quality of patient care;
- structural, organizational and environmental factors that have a causal effect on the work of nurses and health care quality;
- accurate, useful and feasible measurement of nursing's contributions to health care quality;
- methods to produce credible estimates of the changes in nursing and patient outcomes that can be attributed to changes in the nursing workplace and/or workforce;
- challenges that affect the conduct of research related to the quality of nursing care; and
- facilitators and barriers to the successful adoption of research findings to improve nursing care across acute-care settings and health care systems.

In this third round of the program, approximately seven two-year grants of up to \$300,000 each will be awarded to interdisciplinary research teams to investigate the relationships between nursing care and patient outcomes. **Proposals can be submitted in response to one of the specific topic areas below, or can be investigator-initiated ideas consistent with the broad set of goals outlined above.** Funded teams will participate in three meetings to facilitate cross-fertilization of ideas and methods, to acquire input from stakeholders and to disseminate results. The first of these meetings will be held July 16–17, 2008. The *project director* and one other member of the project team (i.e., one scholar from nursing and one from another discipline) will be required to attend the meeting. At the end of the two-year grant period, teams will be required to produce results that can be shared in multiple forms including a synthesis of research findings and other communications vehicles targeted to inform decisions by policy-makers, hospital administrators and others.

For projects that involve data collection, grantees may be required to submit public use data files to the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR), University of Michigan at the end of their grant. Guidelines for archiving datasets can be found at the ICPSR Web site at <http://webapp.icpsr.umich.edu/cocoon/HMCA-FAQ/0186.xml>.

Topic Areas

In its first two rounds, the INQRI program awarded grants to 21 interdisciplinary teams engaged in research intended to improve the quality of health care in the United States. Among these studies are projects that are: developing and testing measures of nurses' influence on health care quality and patient safety; examining the processes of nursing care that affect the quality of patient outcomes; exploring nurses' contributions to pay for performance initiatives; and advancing quality improvement research by determining how nursing care affects patient outcomes.

As we await results from these important studies, in round three of INQRI, RWJF is seeking proposals that will examine how nurses, the largest group of health professionals in the United States, contribute to high quality care patient care by eliminating waste and maximizing value. To ensure that the projects will produce results that can be used to benefit health care consumers, we are shifting the program's focus from one centered on hospitals to one that permits applicants to consider efficiency of nursing care among multiple providers and/or across settings.

We welcome all studies that address nurses' contributions to enhancing quality while improving efficiency. We are especially interested in proposals that examine:

- *The Role of Nurses on Efficient Health Care Teams*—A recent Institute of Medicine (IOM) report on performance measurement embraced the idea that providers share accountability for health care outcomes. The need

for shared accountability is particularly evident for episodes of care where consumers' health outcomes are influenced by nurses, physicians and other health care providers in, for example, hospitals, home care agencies and primary care settings. *Thus, we seek proposals that identify and evaluate nurses' contributions to health care teams as leaders, members or innovators, and the corresponding impact on the efficiency of these teams during episodes of care.*

- *The Effect of the Work Environment on the Efficiency of Nursing Care*—The importance of nursing inputs (e.g., staffing and teamwork) on health outcomes and costs has been documented to some extent. The work environment in which these inputs are supplied is also likely to affect the existence and size of those impacts. *Thus, we seek proposals that explore the impact of the environment where nurses deliver services on episodes of care and other measures of nurses' contributions to health care efficiency.*

Key elements in improved efficiency include improvements in quality, real resource costs, and in the sensitivity of outcomes to consumer and other stakeholder preferences. We recognize that all members of the interdisciplinary audience we seek to reach through this call for proposals may not share the same definition of “efficiency.” We expect each research team to make the case for its selected conceptual and operational definitions of episode of care and efficiency.

- *Investigator-initiated Research Questions:* In addition to projects that address nurses' influence on health care efficiency over episodes of care, we also are interested in investigator-initiated ideas that are: (a) *consistent with the broad set of program goals outlined above;* and (b) *have the potential to make methodological or conceptual contributions to the field of quality improvement.* Proposals designed to capture the contributions nurses make to patient-centered outcomes or to eliminate health care disparities would fit under the “investigator-initiated” category.

Eligibility Criteria

Only interdisciplinary teams with at least one scholar from nursing and at least one scholar from another discipline are eligible to apply. To develop and disseminate rigorous findings on the relationship of nursing to health outcomes, teams will benefit from including members skilled in research design and interpretation who can ensure (to the extent possible) that associations observed or discovered represent true causation. Demonstrating causation would enhance impact by facilitating publication of research on the effect of nursing on health outcomes in major health services research and clinical journals. An intervention may be interdisciplinary in implementation (with non-nurse professionals collaborating with nurses), but it also must be interdisciplinary in design and interpretation (with inclusion of disciplines such as statistics, economics, sociology and other disciplines contributing expertise to research design).

Preference will be given to applicant organizations that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and are not private foundations as defined under Section 509(a). *Please note that the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation makes grants to organizations in the United States and its territories only.*

Selection Criteria

Brief proposals will be reviewed by a diverse group of researchers and stakeholders. Selected applicants will then be invited to submit full proposals for funding consideration.

Brief proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Significance of the nursing quality research question examined.
- Evidence of meaningful interdisciplinary collaboration in both the conception and design of the project.
- Potential to produce new information that can demonstrate where nursing makes a contribution to quality and/or improve the quality of care that nurses provide.
- Relevance and potential impact of the findings for both practice and policy.
- Timeliness of the project for affecting policy development or implementation.
- Quality of plans for disseminating findings among key stakeholders in practice, research and policy.
- Potential for translation of findings to improve health care quality.

Full proposals also will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- *The idea*—innovativeness and relevance of question; soundness of conceptual framework; potential generalizability; and impact and adoption of findings.
- *The methods*—methodological rigor; extent to which design can establish causal relationship between nursing and quality; feasibility; data precision; and strength of analytical plan.
- *The team*—evidence of involvement of scholars from nursing and other disciplines in conceptualization; choice of empirical methods and plans for dissemination; experience of team as well as efforts to involve new scholars; and capacity of team to complete project on schedule.
- *The plans for impact and translation*—incorporation of stakeholders into the study design and plans for

dissemination; and evidence of plans to use research findings to influence quality-related issues (e.g., nursing care processes; nurses' work environment; measurement of nursing performance).

All primary data collected under this program are subject to RWJF's general requirement for producing datasets for public use.

Evaluation and Monitoring

Oversight for this program is provided by a national advisory committee (NAC). As a condition of accepting RWJF funds, grantees will be required to participate in formative and summative evaluations.

Grantees are expected to meet RWJF requirements for the submission of narrative and financial reports. Grantees are also required to submit periodic information as needed for overall project performance monitoring and management. Grantees will work in cooperation with a communications firm hired to increase the impact of findings. Project directors will be required to attend periodic meetings and give progress reports on their grants. At the close of each grant, the lead organization is expected to provide a written report on the project and its findings suitable for wide dissemination. *Please note that a finding suggesting that a concept is not sufficiently linked to nursing quality is a result equally important as one that discovers a viable strategy to improve the quality of care provided by nurses.*

Use of Grant Funds

Grant funds may be used for project staff salaries, consultant fees, data collection and analysis, meetings, supplies, project-related travel, and other direct project expenses, including a limited amount of equipment deemed essential to the project. In keeping with RWJF policy, grant funds may *not* be used to subsidize individuals for the costs of their health care, to support clinical trials of unapproved drugs or devices, to construct or renovate facilities, for lobbying, or as a substitute for funds currently being used for similar activities.

Since the INQRI annual meeting on July 16–17, 2008 will occur prior to the grant period, travel for selected teams will be pre-arranged and paid by the program. Additionally, related meeting expenses will be reimbursable. However, each selected team will be required to budget for travel and related meeting expenses for the project director and one other team member to attend each of the two subsequent annual meetings.

How to Apply

Proposals for this program must only be submitted through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system at <http://grantmaking.rwjf.org/nri3>.

There are two stages in the competitive proposal process: (1) the submission of a brief proposal that will describe the project, and, *if invited*, (2) the submission of a full proposal and line-item budget.

Stage I: Brief Proposal

Applicants must submit a seven-page brief proposal, which includes a six-page proposal narrative and a one-page preliminary budget. Applicants must also complete a set of questions designed to assist staff in the overall program evaluation.

The INQRI Helpdesk will host optional training sessions for Grantmaking Online via Web conferencing. Scheduling information about these sessions will be posted on the INQRI Web site at www.inqri.org.

All inquiries regarding the program, selection criteria or proposal requirements may be directed to:

INQRI Helpdesk
6003 Executive Boulevard, Suite 400
Rockville, MD 20852
Phone: (800) 978-8309
E-mail: INQRHelpdesk@constellagroup.com

RWJF does not provide individual critiques of proposals submitted. The program's NAC will make recommendations about grants to Foundation staff. All grant decisions are made by RWJF.

Program Direction

Direction for this program is provided by the University of Pennsylvania and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Administrative support for the program is provided by:

Constella Group, L.L.C.
6003 Executive Boulevard, Suite 400
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Responsible staff members at the University of Pennsylvania are:

- Mary Naylor, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.A.N., *program director*
- Mark Pauly, Ph.D., *program co-director*
- Heather Kelley, M.A., *program associate*
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Responsible staff members at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are:

- Lori Melichar, Ph.D., *senior program officer*
- Susan Hassmiller, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.A.N., *senior program officer*
- John Lumpkin, M.D., M.P.H., *senior vice president and director, Health Care Group*
- Linda Wright Moore, M.S., *senior communications officer*
- Lois Shevlin, *grants administrator*

Responsible staff members at Constella Group, L.L.C. are:

- Steven Morefield, M.D., *program advisor*
- Laura Clarke, *project manager*
- Christine Eby, *program operations specialist*
- Barbara Stahl, *meeting planner*

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Timetable

■ **December 12, 2007 (3 p.m. ET)**

Deadline for receipt of brief proposals.*

■ **February 18, 2008**

Applicants notified of invitation to submit a full proposal.

■ **April 10, 2008 (3 p.m. ET)**

Deadline for receipt of full proposals.

■ **June 18, 2008**

Grantees notified of funding decisions.

■ **July 16–17, 2008**

Annual INQRI meeting.

■ **September 1, 2008**

Grants begin.

* *All proposals must be submitted through the RWJF Grantmaking Online system. All applicants should log in to the system and familiarize themselves with online submission requirements well before the final submission deadline. Program staff may not be able to assist all applicants in the final 24 hours before the submission deadline. In fairness to all applicants, the program will not accept late proposals.*

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 improving the health and health care of all Americans, we work with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change.

For more than 35 years we've brought experience, commitment and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those we serve. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, we expect to make a difference in your lifetime.

For more information visit www.rwjf.org.

Sign up to receive e-mail alerts on upcoming calls for proposals at www.rwjf.org/services.



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October 2007