



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Alabama Department of Public Health's Jessica Hardy Chosen as a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Public Health Nurse Leader

She Is One of Just 25 Public Health Nurses Selected for Prestigious Leadership Development Program

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MONTGOMERY, ALA. – Jessica Hardy, MPH, DNP, RN, the director of the Office of Women's Health of the Alabama Department of Public Health, is one of just 25 nurses from across the country to be selected as a Public Health Nurse Leader (PHNL) by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). She will participate in a two-year leadership development program designed to strengthen the capacity of senior public health nurses to improve population health, address social determinants of health, respond to emerging trends in health and health care, influence policy, and lead collaboration in their communities.

The program's goal is to support nurses who are ready to lead public health departments in building a Culture of Health in their communities. Since PHNLs participate in partnerships across all sectors and disciplines that lead to collaborative action, they can leverage new and existing opportunities for even healthier communities. As part of the Future of Nursing: Campaign for Action, the PHNLs will work closely with the Action Coalitions in their states to implement recommendations from the Institute of Medicine's Future of Nursing report.

"At RWJF, we are working to build a Culture of Health that enables everyone in the United States to live the healthiest lives possible, supported by a system in which nurses are essential partners in providing care and promoting health," said Susan Hassmiller, PhD, RN, FAAN, RWJF's senior adviser for nursing and director of the *Campaign for Action*—a joint initiative of RWJF and AARP. "We are so proud of all 25 nurses accepted into this program and excited about the many ways they will strengthen their state Action Coalitions by bringing public health expertise to their work. Every one of the nurses in this program will help make their communities healthier and our health care system stronger."

"I am thrilled to have been selected for this honor, and look forward to strengthening my skills so I can do even more to improve the health of my community and help transform the nursing profession," Hardy said. "I know this experience will enhance my ability to serve my community. I look forward to working even more closely with the Alabama Health Action Coalition (AL-HAC) Alabamahealthactioncoalition.org in the months ahead."

Hardy has served more than 20 years with the Alabama Department of Public Health in various capacities, which include assistant state nursing director, emergency preparedness nurse coordinator, as the Alabama women's health liaison for the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services and for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and she is passionate about women's health.

In 2002 Hardy was appointed to serve as the first director for the Alabama Office of Women's Health (OWH), a position she continues to hold, and was appointed as acting director of Alabama's Office of Minority Health from 2008 to 2012. In addition to the daily responsibilities of the OWH, she serves as the state coordinator for the Emergency Preparedness Closed Points of Dispensing (POD) Program throughout the state. Hardy has served as a presenter on health issues at local, state, and national conferences, and is an active member in a number of professional organizations.

RWJF's *Public Health Nurse Leaders* program was open to registered nurses who hold leadership positions in governmental public health organizations. Its goal is to help the PHNLs develop their leadership skills and connections with key influencers so they can build and spread a Culture of Health. Participating nurses will spend their first year focused on individual leadership development. Second-year activities are designed to enhance the leadership competencies and coaching skills of both the nurses in this program and key members of the Action Coalition in their states.

The Public Health Nurse Leaders selected for this program are from: Montgomery, Ala.; Phoenix, Ariz.; Little Rock, Ark.; Lakeport, Calif.; Los Angeles, Calif.; Marietta, Ga.; Honolulu, Hawaii; Belleville, Ill.; Mason City, Iowa; Hutchinson, Kan.; Paulina, La.; Baltimore, Md.; St. Cloud, Minn.; Jackson, Miss.; Jefferson City, Mo.; Lincoln, Neb.; Santa Fe, N.M.; Syracuse, N.Y.; Charlotte, N.C.; Columbus, Ohio; Marysville, Ohio; Austin, Texas; Brownsville, Texas; Seattle, Wash.; and Martinsburg, W.Va.

The RWJF *Public Health Nurse Leaders* program is located at the Center for Creative Leadership, a global thought leader in the leadership development field for 45 years.

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For more than 40 years the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has worked to improve the health and health care of all Americans. We are striving to build a national Culture of Health that will enable all to live longer, healthier lives now and for generations to come. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org. Follow the Foundation on Twitter at www.rwjf.org/twitter or on Facebook at www.rwjf.org/facebook.

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