

**N E W S F R O M:**  
T H E R O B E R T W O O D J O H N S O N F O U N D A T I O N

For more information, contact:  
Andrea Daitz, RWJF, (609)627-5937  
adaitz@rwjf.org  
Debra Lipson, BJBC, (202) 508-1215  
DLipson@aahsa.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FIVE COALITIONS AWARDED \$7 MILLION  
TO STRENGTHEN THE LONG-TERM CARE WORKFORCE**

*“Better Jobs, Better Care” Program Seeks to Improve Recruitment and Retention of Direct Care Workers*

**Princeton, N.J., July 16, 2003** -- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and The Atlantic Philanthropies today announced the selection of five state-based coalitions to carry out demonstration projects under *Better Jobs, Better Care*, a program that was launched and is supported by both foundations. The goal of the program is to improve the recruitment and retention of quality direct care workers – nursing assistants, home health aides, and personal care attendants – who provide necessary care and support to elderly people with chronic diseases or disabilities.

The *Better Jobs, Better Care* program office, based at The Institute for the Future of Aging Services (IFAS), provides program direction and support in conjunction with the [Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute](#).

“Our inability to get and keep quality workers impacts millions of long-term care consumers every day,” said Maureen Michael, program officer at RWJF. “The policy and practice changes these grantees put into place will improve our understanding of what works in retaining high-quality direct care workers -- workers critical to the care of our elderly and disabled.”

In a national survey conducted in 2002, the vast majority of states reported that nurse aide recruitment and retention were major problems.

“We are confident that these grantees will work to develop innovative strategies that we hope will ultimately serve as a national model,” said Brian Hofland, director of the aging program at The Atlantic Philanthropies. “As baby boomers age, the need for a stable and qualified long-term care workforce is becoming critical.”

(more)

“The difficulty of recruiting and retaining good direct care workers is already affecting the quality of long-term care in America,” said Robyn Stone, Dr.P.H., who directs the *Better Jobs, Better Care* program. “Unless we carefully examine what works and doesn’t work to address this problem, we will be facing an acute shortage of qualified workers in the near future.”

Over the next three years, grantees (see attached list) will implement innovative changes in policy and practice necessary for building a stable, high-quality workforce which currently suffers from difficulties with recruitment of new workers, high turnover, and worker shortages. The grantees represent coalitions of consumer advocates, long-term care workers, provider organizations, and various state agencies.

“There is much to learn from the diversity represented by the grantees – coming from different regions of the country, led by various types of organizations, and pursuing a wide array of workforce improvement strategies,” said Debra Lipson, deputy director of the *Better Jobs, Better Care* program.

More information about the program is available at [www.bjbc.org](http://www.bjbc.org)

###

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, based in Princeton, N.J., is the nation’s largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to health and health care. It concentrates its grantmaking in four goal areas: to assure that all Americans have access to quality health care at reasonable cost; to improve the quality of care and support for people with chronic health conditions; to promote healthy communities and lifestyles; and to reduce the personal, social and economic harm caused by substance abuse – tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs. [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org)

The Atlantic Philanthropies work globally to identify and support leaders, institutions, and organizations dedicated to learning, knowledge-building, and solving pressing social problems. It has a longstanding interest in aging. [www.atlanticphilanthropies.org](http://www.atlanticphilanthropies.org)

The Institute for the Future of Aging Services (IFAS – [www.futureofaging.org](http://www.futureofaging.org)) is housed within the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA – [www.aahsa.org](http://www.aahsa.org)), a not-for-profit association representing 5,600 mission-driven, not-for-profit nursing homes, continuing care retirement communities, assisted living and senior housing facilities, and community service organizations. IFAS bridges the worlds of research, practice and policy to advance the development of high-quality aging services, and serves as the National Program Office for the *Better Jobs, Better Care* program.

***Better Jobs, Better Care***  
**List of Demonstration Grantees**

- **Iowa Caregivers Association (Des Moines, IA)** – ICA, a 10-year old organization that supports direct care workers in their efforts to provide quality care, will use the BJBC grant to expand peer mentor training programs at community colleges throughout the state and integrate peer mentors into provider organizations. It also plans to expand and enhance the state registry of certified nursing assistants and home care workers, and examine alternatives for increasing health insurance coverage of direct care workers.

Contact: Di Findley, Executive Director, ICA, 515-241-8697

- **North Carolina Foundation for Advanced Health Programs (Raleigh, NC)** – This organization, which is closely associated with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, will work with provider and consumer agencies to develop a special licensure designation for home care agencies, and for residential and nursing facilities. Those agencies that achieve high workforce standards and outcomes, such as retention rates and consumer satisfaction, will be eligible for special licensure intended to serve as the basis for higher state payment rates. The increased rates may be used to increase wages and other benefits for direct care workers.

Contact: Susan Harmuth, Senior Project Director, NCFAHP, 919-733-4534

- **Oregon Technical Assistance Corporation (Salem, OR)** – OTAC is a nonprofit organization that promotes independence for persons with disabilities through training, technical assistance and organizational development. It will use BJBC grant funds to support changes in eight provider organizations that seek to improve working relationships between direct care workers and supervisors, and between workers and the people and families they serve. The project will also promote career advancement for direct care workers, and strive for greater diversity of the long-term care workforce so that cultural differences are taken into account in “person-centered care.”

Contact: Jean Tuller, Executive Director, OTAC, 503-364-9943, ext. 12

- **Center for Advocacy for the Rights and Interests of the Elderly – CARIE (Philadelphia, PA)** – This 25-year old consumer advocacy organization will serve as an incubator for a new statewide nonprofit entity to promote policies supporting job quality enhancements for direct care workers in nursing facilities and home care agencies. These improvements will include wage raises, mentoring programs, and the adoption of uniform training requirements across long-term care settings. CARIE and the new organization will also help long-term care providers implement effective culture change practices in five regions throughout Pennsylvania.

Contact: Diane Menio, Executive Director, CARIE, 215-545-5728 ext. 244

- **Community of Vermont Elders – COVE (Montpelier, VT)** –COVE, a consumer advocacy organization, works to improve Vermont’s elder policy and programs through advocacy, training, and education. COVE will use BJBC grant funds to expand and improve training programs for direct care workers, use mechanisms to broaden their reach in a highly rural state, and create stronger links between training and organizational culture change. COVE will also work closely with state officials to expand the Quality Awards criteria for long-term care providers to include retention rates and other measures of workforce quality. The project will also advocate for higher wages and benefits for direct care workers.

Contact: Timothy Palmer, Executive Director, COVE, 802-229-4731