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## **NNPHI Announces Funding to Support Emerging Public Health Institutes**

The National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI), with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), has awarded grants to six emerging public health institutes to build capacity and address challenges facing the public health system.

The funding will enable the six institutes – the Florida Public Health Institute, Healthy Appalachia Institute, Institute for Public Health Innovation, Rhode Island Public Health Institute, South Carolina Public Health Institute and the Tennessee Institute for Public Health – to undertake a range of activities intended to cultivate partnerships, enhance executive leadership and build the capacity to inform health policy.

“Public health institutes leverage resources and partnerships to improve the population’s health. The value institutes bring is particularly vital as budget cuts are forcing local public health departments to shed jobs at an alarming rate,” said NNPHI chief executive officer Joseph Kimbrell, MA, LCSW. “Strengthening these institutes is key to strengthening our nation’s public health system.”

Established institutes will serve as mentors over the course of the grant period by attending site visits and meeting with boards and advisory groups. Additionally, the emerging and mentor institutes will hold bi-monthly learning and leadership meetings, including a workshop at the 2010 NNPHI Annual Conference.

The emerging institutes have already begun to improve population health in their states through innovative work around physical activity and nutrition, access to care, social determinants of health, oral health, workforce development, and preparedness.

"Public health institutes play a critical role in our nation’s public health system,” said Michelle Larkin, JD, director of RWJF’s Public Health team. “With each expansion of this network, we strengthen our public health system’s ability to help all Americans have the opportunity to be as healthy as they can be."

NNPHI currently has 35 members representing a range of 501c3 organizations and university affiliates. Together, institutes and NNPHI help leverage the ability of governmental public health to fight the obesity epidemic<sup>1</sup>, prepare for the launch of national accreditation, and move toward a culture of quality improvement.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Marziale, Erin. “Public Health Institute Activity and Capacity: Physical Activity and Nutrition Overview” 11/18/08. Retrieved at: [http://nnphi.org/CMSuploads/Proof%20of%20Concept\\_Physical%20Activity%20and%20Nutrition-49510.doc](http://nnphi.org/CMSuploads/Proof%20of%20Concept_Physical%20Activity%20and%20Nutrition-49510.doc)

<sup>2</sup> Gillen, Sarah. The Role of Public Health Institutes in Quality Improvement and Accreditation. 12/4/08. Retrieved at: <http://nnphi.org/CMSuploads/Master%20Presentation-89838.ppt>

In collaboration with governmental public health, academia and public health partners and stakeholders, institutes collaborate to conduct public health work rapidly and efficiently. They provide value to the public health system by designing and managing programs, providing technical assistance, conducting research and evaluation, and gathering evidence to inform policy.

“Institutes build capacity at the state and local levels to support community health improvement,” said Dr. Karen Minyard, Chair of the Board of NNPHI and Executive Director of the Georgia Health Policy Center. “By investing in their development, we are creating a stronger network dedicated to serving communities all over the nation.”

NNPHI is committed to the development of all emerging institutes and provides technical assistance through one-on-one leadership discussions, meeting with boards and advisory groups and linking emerging institutes to resources within the network.

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*The National Network of Public Health Institutes promotes the development and sustainability of unique non-profit organizations that are making innovative contributions to public health. Public health institutes are committed to collaborating with government, the business community, academia, and other non-profit organizations to improve public health structures, systems and outcomes. Thirty-five member institutes in twenty-eight states currently share NNPHI's vision to foster innovations in health.*

*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, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 35 years, the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime.*