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LOCAL CONSORTIUM TO ADDRESS NURSING SHORTAGE

Public Health Nursing targeted for improvement

Milwaukee, WI – The Faye McBeath Foundation, leading a consortium of over a dozen funding, nursing and public health partners, has been selected for funding in the second round of *Partners Investing in Nursing's Future, (PIN)*. *PIN* is a national initiative to develop and test local solutions to end America's nursing shortage. Area partners, including a statewide nursing center, Milwaukee nursing schools and public and community health groups, secured funding through a competitive national review process.

A two-year grant of \$250,000 from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is the cornerstone investment, with local partners Greater Milwaukee, Northwestern Mutual and Faye McBeath Foundations providing an additional \$140,000. Local schools of nursing, public health departments, and community health organizations will also be providing time and an estimated \$75,000 to the effort. The *WI Center for Nursing (WCN)* will lead the program's implementation.

The project partners believe that an adequate and diverse community and public health nurse workforce cannot be developed without a redesign of both educational and practice strategies. Community practice sites, including public health agencies, will collaborate with area nursing schools to update curricula and improve clinical placements for nurses. Placing a minimum of fifteen senior nursing students in funded traineeships in community and public health agencies will test these new strategies. Special efforts will be made to recruit students of diverse backgrounds. "It is vital", noted Scott Gelzer, Executive Director of the Faye McBeath Foundation, "that we forge a school and workplace partnership to increase the number and enhance the effectiveness of public health nurses."

"The goal of this project", stated Sally Lundeen, Dean of the School of Nursing at UW-Milwaukee and Board Chair of WCN, "is to create and sustain a nursing workforce prepared to meet the needs of populations and communities across the state". She noted "public health and community nurses are critical providers for healthy children, families and older adults in front line settings such as schools, community nursing centers, community health centers, public health departments and senior centers".

It is critical this project be undertaken immediately due to a precipitous decline in the public health workforce in the region. This decline is due to multiple factors including, aging of the nurse workforce, increased need for diversity in the ranks of nurses, public-private employer competition for nurses, narrowly designed nursing roles, and sustained budget and funding cuts. The result is a loss of over one-half of the nursing workforce in community and governmental settings in recent years. Recent data from the WI Division of Public Health track a steady decline in the number of community and public health nurses, who now number only one RN to every 10,000 people in SE WI.

Led by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Northwest Health Foundation, PIN encourages local foundations to act as catalysts in developing grassroots strategies to establish a stable, high-quality nursing workforce. The local program partners include Alverno, Carroll College, Marquette University and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Schools of Nursing, Milwaukee Area Technical College, the City of Milwaukee and Waukesha County Public Health Departments, Silver Spring Community Nursing Center, 16th Street Health Center and several others. The project is led by the WI Center for Nursing, a statewide organization dedicated to workforce research and planning, diversity

of the profession, retention and recruiting of individuals into nursing. For more information visit the WCN website www.wisconsincenterfornursing.org.

Partners Investing in Nursing's Future is a collaborative project between nursing organizations and local foundations. "The stability and quality of our nation's health care rely heavily on a sufficient supply of appropriately educated and skilled nurses," said Susan B. Hassmiller, R.N., Ph.D., F.A.A.N., senior program officer at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. "While the nursing shortage is a national issue, community-based interventions are necessary to finding solutions that work in different health care environments. This unique program was designed to bring regional philanthropies together to address the nursing shortage on a community-level, fostering innovations beyond what any one foundation can do alone." Information about *Partners Investing in Nursing's Future* is available at www.PartnersInNursing.org.

"Because all health care is local, solutions need to be tailored to meet the needs of the individual communities these nurses serve," said Judith Woodruff, J.D., program director of the Northwest Health Foundation and *Partners Investing in Nursing's Future*. "We are pleased to offer this grant to The Faye McBeath Foundation, which is well-qualified to explore solutions for the people of Milwaukee. Not only do we believe The Faye McBeath Foundation will make significant improvements in Wisconsin, but we believe that the other 20 projects can exchange ideas and benefit from the work of The Faye McBeath Foundation as well."

The PIN initiative unites these public health allies in a common quest to improve the public health in WI. The program is slated for a launch in the fall.

The Faye McBeath Foundation was founded in 1964 and is devoted to the welfare of the people of Wisconsin with major emphasis on the four-county metro Milwaukee area. The Foundation devotes its resources to five areas of interest including children, aging and elders, health, health education, and civic and governmental affairs. Annual giving ranges from \$1.2 – 1.5 million per year. For more information about The Faye McBeath Foundation, visit www.fayemcbeath.org.

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 30 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. See www.rwjf.org.

Northwest Health Foundation is an independent, charitable foundation committed to advancing, supporting, and promoting the health of the people of Oregon and southwest Washington. We focus on issues of health and health care in our region, seeking concrete solutions to today's health problems while advocating to prevent tomorrow's. As part of our commitment to cultivate a stable, skilled nursing workforce in the region, Northwest Health Foundation invests in collaborative and sustainable solutions to address the nursing shortage, including the development of advocacy and leadership within the nursing community. See www.nwhf.org.

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