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Major new program will train physicians and nurses to conduct research to improve health care and the health of communities

UCLA has banded with Yale University, the University of Michigan and the University of Pennsylvania to launch the new National Clinician Scholars Program, which will educate nurses and physicians to serve as leaders, researchers, and change agents in health care, community health, and public policy.

The innovative program fills the gap left after the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) ended its Clinical Scholars program for physicians. This new program, however, expands on the RWJF program by including nurse scientists in addition to physicians to address new and emerging issues related to health care delivery and improving the health of communities.

"This new national program that builds on the over 40-year legacy of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholars program will create leaders and change agents with the needed skills to transform health care delivery and ultimately the health of our nation," said Dr. Carol Mangione, co-director of the RWJF Clinical Scholars Program and the new program at UCLA.

The National Clinician Scholars Program will partner with organizations sponsoring a number of individual scholar positions and inter-professional training between nurses and physicians. Consistent with the recommendations from the Institute of Medicine's "Future of Nursing" report, this new program will help to transform the health care system by providing opportunities for nurses and physicians to serve as full partners in health care redesign, improvement, and research. Fundamental elements from the RWJF program such as high-quality mentoring, a tailored curriculum, clinical work, and annual meetings will be retained in the new program.

“Best patient outcomes require nurses to be full partners in delivering the right care in the right settings,” said Linda Sarna, interim dean of the UCLA School of Nursing and co-director of the UCLA program. “The new National Clinician Scholars Program provides physicians and nurses the opportunity to work together to achieve better health outcomes.”

At the heart of the program, partners at each institution work directly with each scholar to identify and develop projects to solve current real world problems and to cultivate the scholar’s unique research and leadership skills. Integration of physician and nurse researchers in training to advance the field of healthcare from different perspectives will shape the future of health and healthcare in ways that we have not seen before.

UCLA will work with an exciting consortium of partner institutions called the UCLA Southern California Clinician Leaders Program. In addition to UCLA’s David Geffen School of Medicine and School of Nursing, the consortium includes the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, Greater Los Angeles Veterans Health System, and Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science, among others. The consortium will identify real-time, regional health challenges and recruit scholars to address these challenges with the goal of eliminating health disparities in Los Angeles and will implement programs that reduce wait times, save resources, and improve outcomes. The research projects undertaken through the program will not be limited to academia or laboratories; but rather will be partnered and embedded in our community. In this way, scholars not only receive education, but their project-based work will improve the health of persons in Los Angeles in real time. The community embedded projects make up the core of the two-year training experience, and scholars also will partake in an innovative curriculum to build a robust set of skills in organizational and social change, applied translation research methodology, community engagement, program development and evaluation, team management, communication, and leadership.

The RWJF Clinical Scholars Program made great strides in training leaders to serve as the workforce for change toward health improvement. The National Clinician Scholars Program honors that legacy by expanding on its important work.

Individuals selected for Cohort 2016-18 will begin the program on July 1, 2016. Please visit the new program website at www.nationalcsp.org. Interested applicants can leave their email address on our secure website so that we may send them updates on the program. Applications will be accepted via www.ncspapp.org.

Additionally, the program will distribute a call for applications for new sites to join the consortium after this initial year.

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