

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation **New Careers in Nursing**

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) joined with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) in 2008 to create the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

New Careers in Nursing

(NCIN) Scholarship Program to help alleviate the nursing shortage and increase diversity in the nursing workforce. Through annual grants to schools of nursing, the NCIN program provides \$10,000 scholarships to college graduates with degrees in other fields who wish to transition into nursing through an accelerated baccalaureate or master's nursing program.

Nursing's academic leaders have long recognized the strong connection between a culturally diverse nursing workforce and the ability to provide quality patient care. According to the National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice, diversifying the nursing profession is essential to meeting the health care needs of the nation and reducing health disparities that exist among many underserved populations. AACN is working with RWJF to help remedy these critical issues.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation New Careers in Nursing Scholarship Program

When the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was signed into law, health care coverage was extended to 32 million Americans who will be entering our system of care. In order to meet the needs of a growing and increasingly diverse patient population, our already over-burdened nursing workforce will need to both increase in number and diversify in skills. To help alleviate some of that burden, for the past two years, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), have sought to address the current nursing shortage and prepare future nursing leaders through the *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation New Careers in Nursing Scholarship Program* (NCIN). NCIN provides annual scholarships to students in accelerated baccalaureate and master's nursing programs, the most efficient route to licensure as a registered nurse (RN) for persons who have already completed a baccalaureate or graduate degree in a field other than nursing.

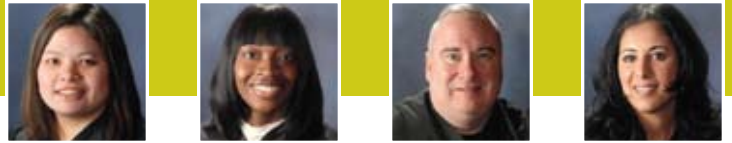
*...to help
alleviate
the nursing
shortage
and increase
diversity in
the nursing
workforce.*

Nurses working in our new health care system will be caring for the most varied patient population our nation has ever seen, and to provide the highest quality of care, the nursing workforce must be culturally competent. To help build such a workforce, the NCIN program continues to provide funding for students traditionally underrepresented in nursing. Through accelerated degree scholarships of \$10,000, NCIN has championed hundreds of students from racially and ethnically diverse as well as economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Through its first two rounds of funding, NCIN has supported 1,406 scholars at 84 schools of nursing across the nation. As the first cohorts of scholars begin to graduate, NCIN is evaluating the program's impact on the nursing workforce and is seeing some positive trends.

NCIN scholars at the Medical College of Georgia.



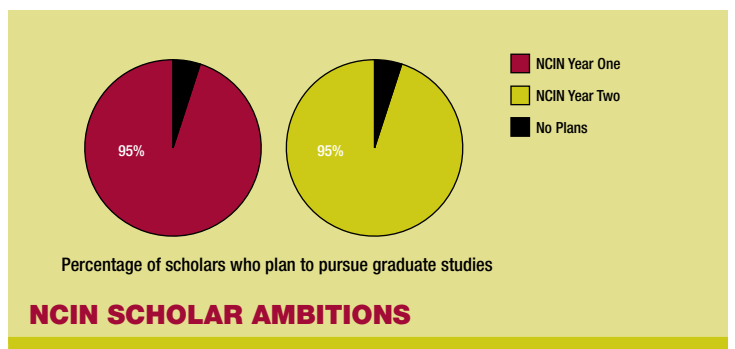
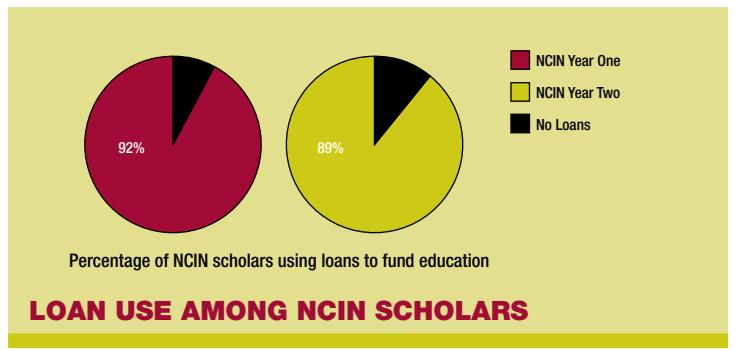
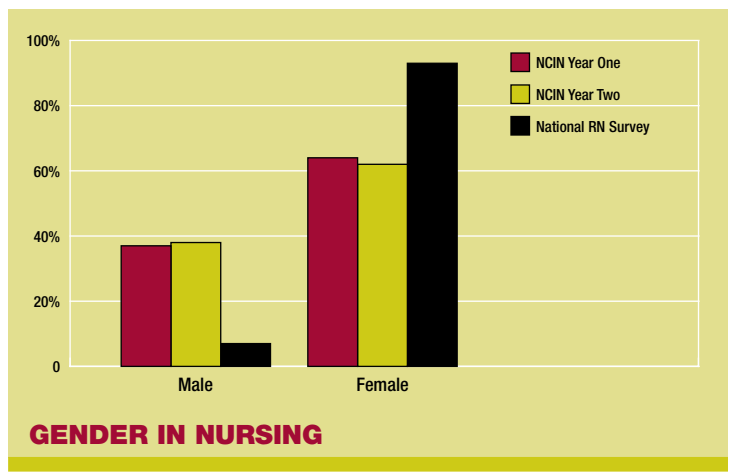
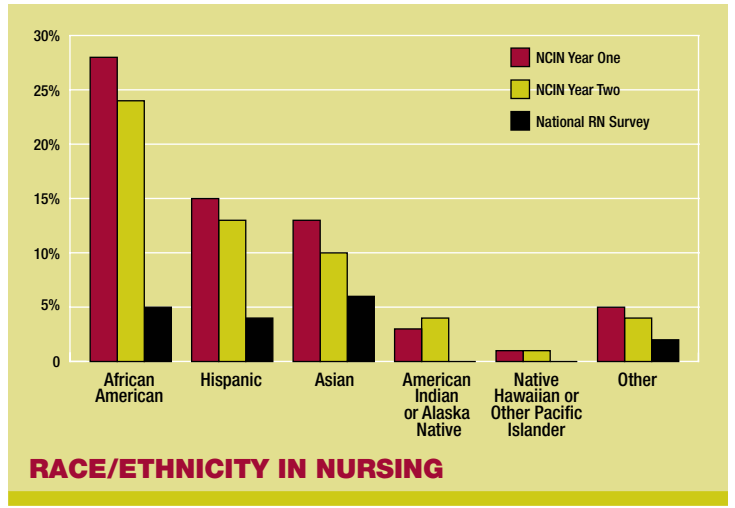


Changing the Face of Nursing

A 2008 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services survey of registered nurses shows a gradual shift towards a more diverse pool of nurses over the course of a decade. While these findings are encouraging, the numbers are still no where near representative of the U.S. patient population. White, non-Hispanic nurses represent 83% of the workforce but provide services to a population that is only 66% White, non-Hispanic. The NCIN program is significantly more diverse as 45% of scholars are White, non-Hispanic, 60% of which are male. These statistics illustrate the importance of moving NCIN scholars into the nursing profession quickly to provide care to these patients with diverse needs. Data from an NCIN 2009–2010 scholar survey chart the two-year progression toward realizing this goal.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

In its second year of funding, NCIN scholarships supported 119 (24%) African-American students, 61 (13%) Hispanic, 48 (10%) Asian, 18 (4%) American Indian or Alaska Native, 5 (1%) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and 19 (4%) scholars who identified themselves as “other.” Respondents were able to self-identify with more than one ethnicity.





GENDER

NCIN has also provided scholarships to a growing group of men who wish to transition into nursing. In year one, 37% of NCIN scholars were male and 63% were female. In year two, the percentage of male scholars grew to 38% while females represented 62% of students. This presence of male nursing students far exceeds the national nursing population, which is 7% male and 93% female.

FUELING FINANCIAL SUPPORT

NCIN scholarships continue to ease financial barriers to nursing careers. In a year-one survey, scholarship recipients cited NCIN as their major source of funding and a large financial incentive to obtaining a nursing degree. Year-two survey results continue to show the importance of financial support in a student's ability to progress toward a degree. Although the NCIN program is doing its part, scholars still struggle to afford a nursing education. In the 2008–2009 school year, 92% of students relied on loans to fund their education and in the 2009–2010 year, 89% cited using loans to pay for their education. *NCIN scholarships assist in reducing the debt burden to students upon graduation.*

For 80% of scholarship recipients, NCIN funding is the only source of support outside of personal savings and loans allowing them to pursue a career in this crucial and demanding field.

NCIN ADDRESSING THE NURSING SHORTAGE

The NCIN program aims to alleviate the nursing shortage in three unique ways. As accelerated-degree students, NCIN scholars quickly transition into nursing from undergraduate degrees in other disciplines. Accelerated programs take just 12–18 months to complete while typical nursing programs take 24 months or longer. Accelerated programs have proliferated over the past 15 years, and today, 230 accelerated BSN (ABSN) programs and 65 accelerated masters (AMSN) programs are offered across the country.

NCIN also encourages accelerated-degree students to explore education past their entry-level nursing degrees, a path which qualifies and prepares these students for faculty positions. According to data from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration, nurses entering the profession via baccalaureate programs are four times more likely than other nurses to pursue a graduate degree in nursing. Students prepared at these levels may one day fulfill teaching positions that are desperately needed in the United States. Shortages in nursing school faculty have deterred schools from admitting all qualified applicants, thus slowing the process of moving students into the nursing pipeline. In both year one and year two of the NCIN program, a considerable number of NCIN scholars reported an interest in

pursuing graduate studies upon the completion of entry-level programs. *In fact, 95% of current and past scholars have future plans to earn graduate degrees.* Expanding this pool of qualified nurses is essential to meet the demand for a both sustainable and demographically representative nurse faculty.

By bringing more students into baccalaureate and master's degree programs, several NCIN schools have also leveraged the NCIN funding to seek other sources of support to expand their faculty as class sizes grow. In 2008, 12 schools of nursing reported increased faculty, including 16 full-time and 14 part-time positions. Now in its third round of funding, NCIN grants will help complement additional faculty in 39 schools of nursing, including 37 full-time (7 clinical) and 7 part-time (3 clinical) in the 2010–2011 academic year.

The University of Missouri-St. Louis is one example of a nursing school that leveraged resources in this way. An increase in educational fee revenue from eight additional students in 2008 allowed the college of nursing to add two full-time faculty members, one part-time clinical faculty member and an assistant dean to support student services and faculty development. In its second year of funding, the college of nursing was able to support a third full-time instructor and for the 2010–2011 school year, another faculty member will join the growing nursing team.

NCIN scholars at the California State University, Fullerton.



Unique Paths Toward Mentorship



2008–2009

“Learning to Lead is a collaborative mentorship program designed to support the development of NCIN scholars at New York University College of Nursing as they transition from student clinicians to practicing nurses. Scholars gain the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences with master’s students in the university’s nursing administration program.”

—NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

“A partnership with the Chicago Area Schweitzer Fellows Program provided mentor relationships with NCIN scholars and program fellows. These “fellows-for-life” act as leadership mentors and coaches, helping scholars to navigate the rigors of a pre-licensure education. These relationships have continued outside of the school and into the community.”

—RUSH UNIVERSITY

2010–2011

“NCIN scholars are encouraged to participate in the university’s AmeriCorps program. AmeriCorps partners campus representatives with community agencies in an attempt to resolve local problems. This allows students to practice and reflect on civic engagement skills while implementing strategic problem solving. Many of the goals and activities of AmeriCorps reinforce the leadership experiences in our Bachelor’s Reach for Accelerated Nursing Degree (BRAND) program. About half of NCIN scholars have joined the AmeriCorps program and continue on after graduation.”

—UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

Mentoring Nurses for Leadership Positions

Perhaps the most unique aspect of the NCIN program is how the NCIN scholars are counseled as they move through their nursing programs. While NCIN works to increase the quantity and quality of nursing professionals and educators, its approach also reflects the importance of producing nursing leaders. In a 2008–2009 NCIN survey, schools described their distinct strategies for mentoring and leadership development. Activities like personal reflection journals, online forums, and frequent seminars with local nursing professionals were offered by several nursing programs. Through initial assessments and the sharing of best practices, NCIN schools of nursing have taken a much more hands-on approach to mentorship in the 2010–2011 grant year. For example, 99 schools of nursing plan to provide one-on-one counseling with faculty, advisors, peers, clinicians, and administrators. Exposure to these specialized experts helps students matriculate into graduate nursing programs and eventually leadership positions. Several schools of nursing will be implementing didactic coursework including workshops and seminars, mentoring programs with professional nursing organizations, service learning opportunities, and attendance at conferences and meetings.

Measuring Success

The NCIN scholarship program has achieved a 98% success rate in distributing awarded scholarships, with only 11 going unused in year one. In rounds one and two of funding, 84 schools have been awarded grants ranging from \$50,000 to \$300,000 with 23 schools participating in both rounds. As the third year of funding approaches, NCIN will broaden its community to 101 schools of nursing.

NCIN scholars are thriving in the fast-paced academic setting of accelerated nursing programs and are moving forward on the path to nursing. A total of 829 (67%) students are progressing on schedule with another 66 (5%) students moving ahead on a slightly slower-paced schedule. This year, the NCIN program celebrated the graduation of 212 students who can now follow their dream of becoming a nurse.

Student panelists at the second annual Program Liaison’s Summit.



PHOTO CREDIT: PETER MULLER

CHRISTINA ACOSTA

Duke University, 2010



What was it like going through an accelerated program?

It was extremely intense earning a BSN in 16 months, but the Duke and NCIN programs did a great job preparing me for the real world.

When you look back in 5 years, what do you think your favorite experience will be?

Probably the clinicals and my trip to Nicaragua. I went there for my service learning trip and it was an incredible eye opener.

So you're an NCIN alumna, what's next?

Since graduation, I've stayed in North Carolina and just started work for a hospital called First Health. I'm currently on the night shift in the neurology unit so the sleep is minimal but the work is rewarding. I think it's a great first job that will give me lots of experience.

If you could do it all over again, would you?

Absolutely. I wouldn't change a thing.

STEVEN SHIELDS

South Dakota State University, 2010



What was it like going through an accelerated program?

Being an accelerated student was hard. I had to put my life on hold while I got my degree, but I'm glad I did it.

As an NCIN scholar, what were some of your unique experiences?

The NCIN program asked that we participate in leadership roles and I chose to be a class representative for a semester. I frequently met with the program director and we talked about ways to improve the course and the types of lesson plans and activities that students could benefit from.

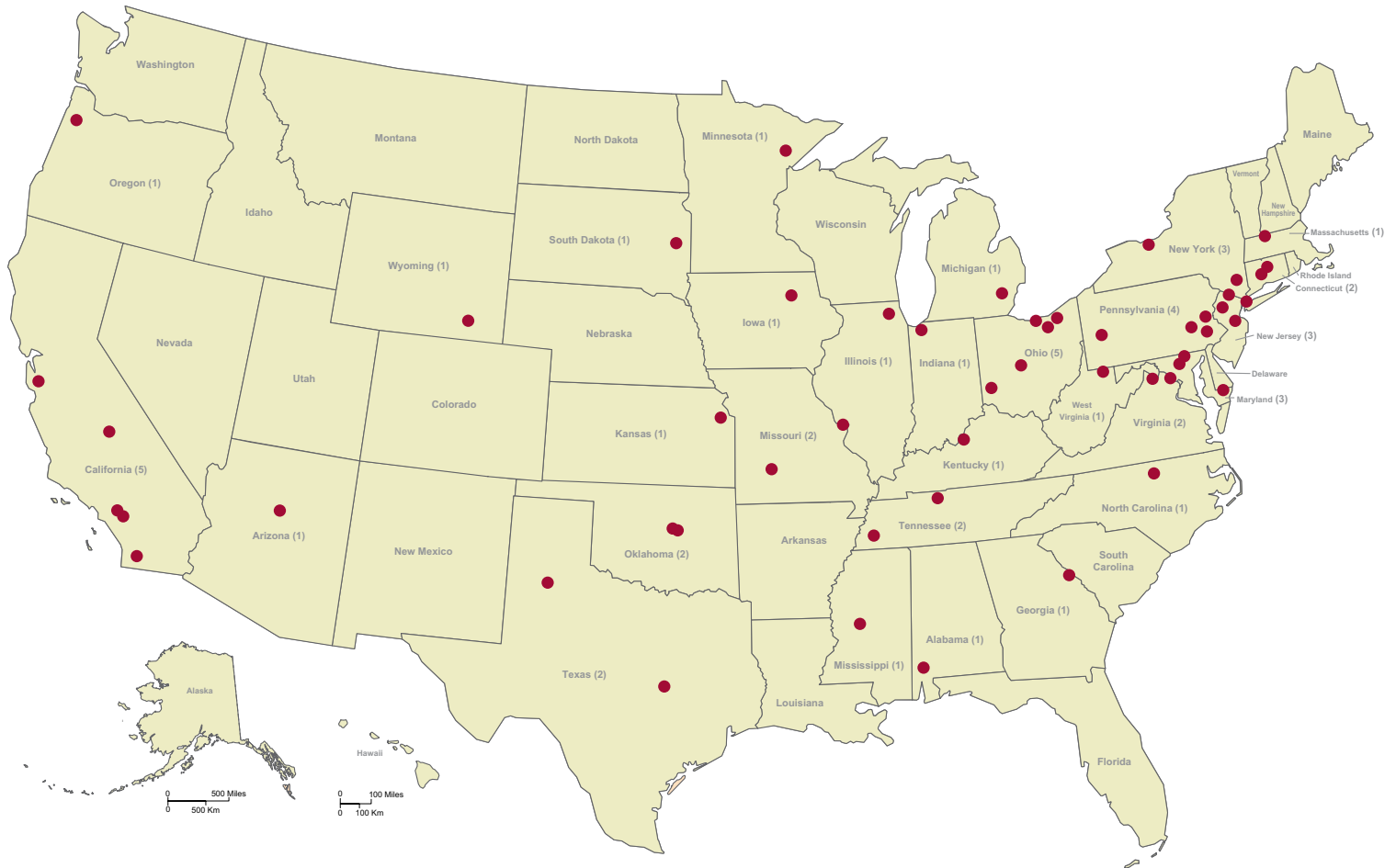
I was also part of a mentorship program and I met with a local physician to talk about the health care setting. I still keep in touch with him to this day. I really appreciated his perspective and experience.

So you're an NCIN alumnus, what's next?

I'm currently working at an in-patient rehabilitation center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

If you could do it all over again, would you?

The accelerated program was really difficult, but it's amazing that I was able to get through the program so quickly and pursue a job.



Geographic Distribution of 2009 - 2010 NCIN Awarded Grants

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, we work with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 35 years we've brought experience, commitment and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those we serve. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, we expect to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org.



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

The **American Association of Colleges of Nursing** is the national voice for baccalaureate and graduate programs in nursing. Representing more than 640 member schools of nursing at public and private institutions nationwide, AACN's educational, research, governmental advocacy, data collection, publications, and other programs work to establish quality standards for bachelor's and graduate degree nursing education, assist deans and directors to implement those standards, influence the nursing profession to improve health care, and promote public support of baccalaureate and graduate nursing education, research, and practice. For more information, visit www.aacn.nche.edu.



American Association
of Colleges of Nursing