



**Contact:** Emily Richardson, JD  
Public Health Communications Manager  
National Network of Public Health Institutes  
erichardson@nnphi.org  
nnphi.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **National Network of Public Health Institutes Launches New Initiative to Improve Performance in Public Health**

**October 3, 2011, New Orleans, LA:**

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) has awarded the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) a \$1.75 million grant to lead a new effort, *Strengthening the Community of Practice for Public Health Improvement (COPPHI)*, to facilitate the exchange of best practices and build capacity among the nation's public health departments to become accredited and conduct quality improvement (QI).

The project is launching as health departments across the country are beginning to submit applications to the Public Health Accreditation Board, a new national system providing consistent standards which enable all Americans to have access to the same quality of services to protect and improve health. "This new initiative is vital to assuring that health departments continue to develop the capacity to apply QI frameworks and tools to transform their organizations and address public health needs," says Joe Kimbrell, MA, LCSW, Chief Executive Officer of NNPHI.

COPPHI builds on the NNPHI-managed *Multi-State Learning Collaborative (MLC)*, a six-year project, also funded by RWJF, which played a critical role in creating momentum for public health accreditation and establishing a vision of a QI culture in the field. "We would not be where we are today with agencies actively pursuing accreditation and implementing QI to improve efficiency and effectiveness without the success of the MLC," says Pamela Russo, MD, MPH, Senior Program Officer at RWJF.

COPPHI will promote shared learning among a broad range of local, state, and tribal health department representatives, researchers, public health institutes, universities, national public health organizations, funders, policymakers, government agencies, and boards of health by:

- Hosting accreditation and QI-focused Open Forum Meetings;
- Sponsoring the costs associated with attending these meetings for up to 125 practitioners preparing for accreditation and engaging in QI;
- Awarding small contracts and individualized, distance-based QI coaching to 60 public health organizations selected via a competitive process;

- Coordinating public health partner organizations to promote the use of the Practice Exchange, a new searchable online database that will organize information from the rapidly growing number of public health quality improvement projects
- Managing a national advisory group for the Practice Exchange.

The first of three accreditation- and QI-focused Open Forum Meetings is scheduled to occur in December, 2011 in the Washington, DC area. A call for proposals to select sites that will receive contracts and QI coaching will be announced at the meeting.

“NNPHI is looking forward to continuing its work in public health performance improvement and leveraging the strengths of its member public health institutes,” said Kimbrell. “Public Health Institutes have managed state-based accreditation programs, provided strategic guidance to health departments around community health improvement planning, facilitated health department QI learning collaboratives, as well as provided QI technical assistance and training for health departments.”

To sign up for COPPHI updates, please contact Emily Richardson at [erichardson@nnphi.org](mailto:erichardson@nnphi.org).

###

#### **About the National Network of Public Health Institutes**

Created in 2001 as a forum for public health institutes (PHIs), today NNPHI convenes its members and partners at the local, state, and national levels in efforts to address critical health issues. NNPHI’s mission is to support national public health system initiatives and strengthen PHIs to promote multi-sector activities resulting in measurable improvements of public health structures, systems, and outcomes. Learn more about NNPHI and its member institutes at [www.nnphi.org](http://www.nnphi.org).

###

#### **About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**

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 health and health care, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, measurable and timely change. For nearly 40 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. For more information, visit [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org).