

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**First Comprehensive Research Resource on the Frontline
Health and Health Care Workforce Now Available**

New chartbook provides synthesis of state, national data

December 14, 2006 - Princeton, N.J. -- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has released a new publication, *Workers Who Care: A Graphical Profile of the Frontline Health and Health Care Workforce*, a 248-page resource that showcases data on the growing numbers of occupations and workers that comprise the frontline health and health care workforce – the 6.5 million workers in the United States who provide their patients and clients with preventive and early intervention services, chronic illness management strategies, and long-term and post-hospitalization rehabilitative care. The chartbook, developed by Health Workforce Solutions LLC (HWS) in San Francisco, is the first comprehensive source of state and national data on the occupational growth outlook, per capita employment, demographic information, and wage outlook and trends for 32 frontline occupations, including medical assistant, health educator, pharmacy technician, recreational therapist and home health aide.

The report also offers recommendations that health and health care employers, policy-makers, teaching and learning organizations, professional associations and accrediting organizations, researchers and foundations can take to support training and advancement for frontline workers.

“We know how critical frontline workers are to ensuring high-quality care and services, but we didn’t have a full picture of what this workforce looks like, what the trends are within and across frontline occupations,” said Victor Capoccia, Ph.D., senior program officer at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. “The *Workers Who Care* chartbook fills that gap in the data, and also uses those data to inform recommendations for action.”

Although nursing shortages are well-known, the *Workers Who Care* resource shows that the workforce challenge is critical almost across the board in frontline health and health care jobs. Currently, about 6.5 million women and men fill these jobs nationally, but by 2012, that number is likely to rise to 9.7 million, an increase driven by the needs of a growing and aging population and the looming retirement of many of these workers.

(more)

Despite frontline workers’ vital and growing responsibilities, few earn a livable wage, and most lack credentials, access to training and opportunities for advancement. Some of the projected job openings would represent a career step up for current employees, and with proper training and support, incumbent workers could fill many of the better-paying, more senior positions, such as supervisory roles.

“The frontline workforce will play an increasingly important role in the U.S. health care system as the population ages,” said David Cherner, M.B.A., M.P.H., managing partner of Health Workforce Solutions LLC. “We are pleased to offer this valuable, easy-to-use resource to further advance initiatives that support this vital group.”

One promising approach to supporting and advancing the frontline workforce is the *Jobs to Careers: Promoting Work-Based Learning for Quality Care* initiative, a program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in collaboration with the Hitachi Foundation. The program, based at Jobs for the Future in Boston, supports nine partnerships of employers, educational institutions and other community organizations to advance and reward the skill and career development of frontline workers.

The Jobs to Careers projects—underway in Arizona, Hawaii, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Oregon (two projects), Pennsylvania, and Texas—will work to improve the way institutions train and advance frontline workers currently employed in a number of entry-level positions, such as dietary aides, substance abuse workers, medical assistants, administrative clerks, and patient care technicians. The program provides workers with training and opportunities that will enable them to gain, and succeed in, jobs with better pay, increased responsibilities and college credit or industry-recognized credentials.

“Jobs to Careers connects the well-being of the millions of frontline workers to the quality of care people receive,” according to Marlene B. Seltzer, president and CEO of Jobs for the Future. “We look forward to collaborating with the nine partnerships in the coming years, helping ensure that their efforts yield clear benefits to frontline workers—and to the millions of Americans, young and old, who they serve every day.”

Jobs to Careers projects are *Workers Who Care: A Graphical Profile of the Frontline Health and Health Care Workforce* is available online at www.healthws.com/company/whats_new.htm or www.rwjf.org/special/workerswhocare, where orders for free hard copies may also be placed.

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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 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.

About Health Workforce Solutions LLC (HWS)

Health Workforce Solutions LLC is a research-based strategic consulting and management firm focused on workforce issues in health care. Founded in 2001, the clients of HWS include hospitals and health systems, health plans, professional practice groups and associations, educational and training institutions, foundations and government agencies. For more information, see www.healthws.com.

About Jobs for the Future (JFF)

Jobs for the Future is a Boston-based nonprofit that seeks to accelerate the educational and economic advancement of youth and adults struggling in today's economy. JFF partners with leaders in education, business, government, and communities around the nation to: strengthen opportunities for youth to succeed in postsecondary learning and high-skill careers; increase opportunities for low-income individuals to move into family-supporting careers; and meet the growing economic demand for knowledgeable and skilled workers. JFF serves as the national program office for Jobs to Careers: Promoting Work-Based Learning for Quality Care. For more information, see www.jff.org.

About the Hitachi Foundation

The Hitachi Foundation is a nonprofit, independent, philanthropic organization established to enhance the well-being of economically isolated people in the United States. The Foundation systematically invests in path breaking practices for use by business and nonprofit organizations to mutually address community problems. These practices alleviate conditions that perpetuate poverty and also help to strengthen business.

For more information, contact:

Andrea Daitz, RWJF, (609) 627-5937, adaitz@rwjf.org

David Cherner, Health Workforce Solutions LLC, (877) 892-2430, david@healthws.com

Carmon Cunningham, JFF, (617) 728-4446, ccunningham@jff.org