Washington, D.C. — On August 20, 2012, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) announced the nine states chosen to receive two-year, $300,000 grants to advance state and regional strategies to create a more highly educated, diverse nursing workforce through its new program, *Academic Progression in Nursing (APIN)*. The APIN program will be administered by the American Organization of Nurse Executives (AONE) on behalf of the Tri-Council for Nursing, consisting of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), the National League for Nursing (NLN), American Nurses Association (ANA), and AONE.

The Phase I two-year initiative will provide $4.3 million in support to nine state ‘Action Coalitions’ as they implement innovative strategies with academic institutions and employers to better prepare nurses to achieve higher degrees, improve patient care, and fill faculty and advanced practice roles. The states chosen for the new grants are California, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Montana, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Texas and Washington State. RWJF will support an additional two years of work at the close of Phase I, to allow states that have met or exceeded their benchmarks to continue to make progress.

“The nation needs a well-educated nursing workforce to ensure an adequate supply of public health and primary care providers, improve care for patients living with chronic illness, and in other ways meet the needs of our aging and increasingly diverse population,” said Pamela Austin Thompson, MS, RN, CENP, FAAN, national program director for APIN and chief executive officer of AONE. “We have great confidence in the nine states that will receive these grants to implement bold and effective strategies that will work in their states and create models that other states can utilize.”

“Driving the APIN program is the recommendation from the Institute of Medicine report, *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*, that 80 percent of the nursing workforce be prepared at the baccalaureate level or higher by the year 2020,” said Polly
Bednash, PhD, RN, FAAN, chief executive officer of AACN. “Currently, less than half of nurses in the United States have baccalaureate or higher degrees, and too few associate degree-prepared nurses are seeking to advance their education. Developing new strategies for academic progression will help to ensure that the nursing workforce is well-prepared to provide high-quality, patient-centered care to our nation’s population.”

“APIN will help to build strong partnerships between community colleges and universities to make it easier for nurses to transition to baccalaureate and advanced degrees,” added Beverly Malone, PhD, RN, FAAN, chief executive officer of the NLN. “Nurses who advance their educations are better equipped with the critical competencies necessary to deliver outstanding patient care, including leadership, cultural competence, interprofessional collaboration, and quality and safety.”

“The Tri-Council is uniquely positioned to spearhead the APIN initiative,” said ANA chief executive officer Marla Weston, PhD, RN. “Through bringing together our respective constituencies in practice, leadership, and education, we’re able to facilitate the necessary partnerships at the state and national level to advance academic progression and develop the sustainable infrastructure that will prepare the nurse of the future.”

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 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. Follow the Foundation on Twitter www.rwjf.org/twitter or Facebook www.rwjf.org/facebook.

About the Tri-Council for Nursing
The Tri-Council for Nursing is an alliance of four autonomous nursing organizations each focused on leadership for education, practice and research. The four organizations are the: American Association of Colleges of Nursing; American Nurses Association; American Organization of Nurse Executives; and the National League for Nursing. While each organization has its own constituent membership and unique mission, they are united by common values and convene regularly for the purpose of dialogue and consensus building, to provide stewardship within the profession of nursing. These organizations represent nurses in practice, nurse executives and nursing educators. The Tri-Council’s diverse interests encompass the nursing work environment, health care legislation and policy, quality of health care, nursing education, practice, research and leadership across all segments of the health delivery system.