The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has launched the Future of Nursing Scholars Program to support nurses as they pursue their Ph.Ds.

In its landmark nursing report, the Institute of Medicine recommended that the country double the number of nurses with doctorates which would support more nurse leader, promote nurse-led science and discovery and put more educators in place to prepare the next generation of nurses.

"Implementing the Institute of Medicine nursing report is a major priority for RWJF, because we cannot achieve our mission to improve health and health care without a robust, well-educated nursing workforce and many more highly educated nurse leaders," said Dr. John Lumpkin, RWJF senior vice president and director of the Health Care Group.

"The Ph.D-prepared nurses the Future of Nursing Scholars program supports will help identify solutions to the country's most pressing health problems, and educate thousands of nurses over the course of their careers. They will be positioned to lead change and inspire the next generation of nurses."

The initiative was recently launched at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing, which will serve as the national program office for the Future of Nursing Scholars program.

The co-directors for the Future of Nursing Scholars program are Susan B. Hassmiller, Ph.D, RWJF's senior adviser for nursing and Julie Fairman, Ph.D, the Nightingale professor of nursing and director of the Barbara Bates Center for the Study of the History of Nursing at the Penn’s School of Nursing.

According to the RWJF, fewer than 3,000 of the nation’s more than three million nurses have doctoral degrees in nursing, and many of them have doctor of nursing practice degrees (DNPs), not Ph.Ds, which prepare nurses to conduct research and teach. The average age at which nurses get their Ph.Ds in the U.S. is 46—13 years older than Ph.D earners in other fields.

In 2014, schools of nursing will apply to join the Future of Nursing Scholars program, which will support up to 100 Ph.D nursing candidates over its first two years. The first scholars will begin their Ph.D studies in 2015. They will receive scholarships, stipends, mentoring, leadership development, and dedicated post-doctoral research support. To expand the new program’s reach, RWJF has developed a strategic philanthropic collaborative to engage other donors.

The Independence Blue Cross Foundation is committing $450,000 over three years to support nurses in becoming transformational leaders in education, research and policy.

"Having supported nursing in our region for 10 years, we are very proud to be the first foundation to join this new collaborative, which is bringing together diverse funders to support the Ph.D-prepared nurse leaders the country needs," said Lorina Marshall-Blake, president of the IBC Foundation.

“We expect the nurse scholars this program supports to transform health care through innovation in their communities and nationwide.”

The RWJF is the nation’s largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to health and health care.
Foundation supports nurses pursuing Ph.Ds

- Odunde Festival celebrates African tradition
- Prostate cancer rally set for Father’s Day
- Dorothy McIntyre, 88, Vine Memorial member
- Rosella C. Washington, 55, singer
- Akon to open new club in Dominican Republic