

For Immediate Release

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New Routes to
Community Health

Immigrant groups receive \$1.8 million to create media about community health

MADISON, WI, Sept. 30, 2008. A new model for improving the health of immigrants in the United States using media created by immigrants was announced today by *New Routes to Community Health*, a program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Benton Foundation.

Eight diverse immigrant-led collaborations across the United States each are receiving \$225,000 over three years to create locally-focused media and outreach campaigns that speak directly to immigrants' health concerns at the community level.

In the eight communities, immigrant groups, media makers and prominent community institutions are working together to produce original content in English as well as in immigrants' first languages, including Amharic, Chinese, Creole, French, Lao, Somali, Spanish, Swahili and Vietnamese. Grants were given to collaborations in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Minneapolis/St Paul, Oakland, Philadelphia and San Francisco.

Projects include telenovelas about treating mental health issues in Boston's Haitian community, a social marketing campaign to improve the working conditions of domestic workers in the San Francisco Bay Area, and DVD vignettes to help Chinese elderly navigate the health care system in Los Angeles. Using a wide range of media such as television and radio features, telenovelas, first person narratives, live theater, print, the Internet and social marketing campaigns, *New Routes* projects will map the often difficult terrain of immigrant life in the U.S.

"Immigrants are the new leaders and pathfinders on the route to the American Dream," said Beth Mastin, national program director of *New Routes*. "Our program recognizes the challenges faced by immigrants, but we also see the opportunities they bring to renew our economy with hard work and strengthen our society with strong family and community values. Using today's communications tools, and building leadership through collaboration with stakeholders, *New Routes* helps these 21st Century leaders create that American Dream."

Media content created by the eight projects will be housed at www.newroutes.org and be available for any community to use. Additionally, the Web site will serve as a resource for multimedia, research and news on the topic of immigrant community health.

The eight *New Routes* projects, selected from 166 applicants, include:

Atlanta, GA – HEARMe. East African immigrants and their Atlanta neighbors will collaborate to create on-air, online and on-stage productions promoting health and cultural competency within their community. Partners are Emory University, Sagal Radio and WRFG, community radio station.

Boston, MA - Twa Zanmi (Three Friends). This project will create telenovelas to help Haitian immigrants recognize and respond to symptoms of stress, depression and anxiety. Partners are the Haitian American Public Health Initiatives, Haitian Media Network and the University of Massachusetts Boston.



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Chicago, IL - Salud: Healing through the Arts. Young people are producing radio programming and live theater events focused on helping Latin American youth make better health decisions. Partners are Latinos Progresando, the National Museum of Mexican Art and WRTE, Radio Arte.

Los Angeles, CA – Navigating Health Care in the U.S. for Chinese American Seniors. This project will develop television news features and instructional DVDs to help Chinese American seniors overcome cultural, language and navigational barriers and communicate more effectively with their adult children caretakers and health care providers. Partners are the Asian American Network for Cancer Awareness, Research and Training; Chinatown Service Center and KSCI TV/LA 18.

Oakland, CA - Abriendo las Cajas (Opening Boxes) – This project will develop media aimed at intimate partner (domestic) violence within the Latin American immigrant population in the Fruitvale neighborhood. Partners are La Clinica de la Raza, Bay Area Video Coalition and ZeroDivide.

Philadelphia, PA – Our Stories, Our Health. This project, which will feature immigrant Laotian and Vietnamese immigrants telling their stories on digital video created by Southeast Asian elders, is intended to encourage discussion on health disparities and communication barriers faced by immigrants, with a focus on the problem of high blood pressure. Partners are the Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Associations Coalition (SEAMAAC), University of Pennsylvania, WHY public broadcasting, Thomas Jefferson University and Temple University.

San Francisco, CA - Domestic Worker Safety and Dignity Project. In this project, domestic worker advocates will develop a social marketing campaign advocating healthier working conditions for domestic workers. Partners include La Raza Centro Legal, University of California/Berkeley, and Underground Advertising.

Twin Cities, MN - Egal Shidad: Stories of Somali Health. This project will use folk tales and other cultural approaches to create a series of stories on Somali health for radio, television and classroom use. Partners are the Confederation of Somali Community, ECHO Minnesota, KFAI Community Radio and Saint Paul Neighborhood Network.

New Routes to Community Health is funded through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Vulnerable Populations portfolio. The Benton Foundation and MasComm Associates provide direction and technical assistance for the program.

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. www.rwjf.org.

About the Benton Foundation

The Benton Foundation works to ensure that media and telecommunications serve the public interest and enhance democracy. It pursues this mission by seeking policy solutions that support the values of access, diversity and equity, and by demonstrating the value of media and telecommunications for improving the quality of life for all. www.benton.org.



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