



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**MLH Program Center Planning Grant Announcement**

**Washington, DC – November 2, 2015:** The National Collaborative for Health Equity and CommonHealth ACTION are pleased to announce that the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) has selected their organizations to design the Multisector Leaders for Health (MLH) National Program Center, one of four new RWJF national leadership programs that will develop leaders to promote a national Culture of Health.

“Together, we will bring more than two decades of experience developing diverse teams of leaders who work across sectors to create healthier communities,” said Dr. Brian D. Smedley, National Collaborative for Health Equity’s Executive Director and Co-Founder. “We will leverage what we have learned to design a program that engages people from all sectors—not only public health and healthcare but also others such as business, education, technology, transportation—who are curious, passionate, and open to experimentation as they actively create a Culture of Health in organizations and communities.”

MLH National Program Center participants will engage in three years of learning experiences, including individual and team-based projects that encourage innovation, discovery, and hands-on application. They will work with nontraditional partners on the production of health, engage authentically with community to change systems and institutions, and share their professional and life experiences in support of other leaders and the field. Participants will also work intensively with nationally recognized subject matter experts, mentors, and coaches as well as with their MLH and other National Program Center peers to lead change within and among systems and institutions.

“Creating a Culture of Health requires leaders from all sectors to apply an equity lens—understanding who experiences the benefits and burdens of policies, programs, and practices,” said Natalie S. Burke, President and CEO of CommonHealth ACTION. “Therefore, equity education and strategies will be integral parts of our program center and its design. Through ground-breaking leadership development activities, MLH participants will undergo perspective transformation that requires them to ask new and different questions, challenge old paradigms, and place greater value on the public’s health.”

The National Collaborative for Health Equity and CommonHealth ACTION were selected from a highly-competitive pool of applicants due to the strength of their program design, expertise in multi-sector leadership development, as well as more than a decade of experience serving as a bridge and unifying force among communities, academia, and policymakers.

“One factor that set these organizations apart is their unyielding commitment and ability to address issues of equity in all aspects of the work,” said Dr. Herminia Palacio, Program Director

of the RWJF Leadership Development Program. “They also have a robust track record of respectful and authentic community engagement and capacity-building for organizational and policy change that are necessary for fostering a Culture of Health.”

Working with other National Program Centers funded through the RWJF Leadership Program, the MLH program center will:

- Transform individuals – in both the public and private sectors – into agents of social change;
- Equip individual leaders and teams with tools, skills, knowledge, and competencies necessary to build public will and policymaker support for local, state, and national action to advance health equity;
- Build a common framework, understanding, and language across sectors to help individuals and teams coordinate the use of their resources and strengths;
- Model multi-sector collaboration necessary to create community conditions and opportunities for health; and
- Transform communities into spaces where no one is disadvantaged because of where they were born or live, their income, or the racial or ethnic group with which they identify.

The Planning Grant period is from November 2015 through February 2016. A call for proposals from individuals and/or teams of leaders will be released in the spring of 2016 with the first cohort of awardees to be announced in the fall. Interested applicants can learn more by visiting the National Collaborative for Health Equity website at [www.nationalcollaborative.org](http://www.nationalcollaborative.org), the CommonHealth ACTION website at [www.commonhealthaction.org](http://www.commonhealthaction.org), or the RWJF website at [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org).

The National Collaborative is hiring a Sr. Program Director to lead the MLH Program Center. For more information, please [click here](#).

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**The National Collaborative for Health Equity (NCHE)** serves as a catalyst for partnerships and collaborations among policymakers, researchers, industry, community groups, and others to create healthier, more equitable communities. NCHE is project of New Venture Fund, a 501(c)(3) public charity. New Venture Fund hosts and incubates a wide range of conservation, education, global health, and other charitable projects.

**CommonHealth ACTION** is a national non-profit public health organization that aligns people, resources, and strategies to generate solutions to health and policy challenges

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