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Health Games Research Announces 2009 Call for Proposals

Program will award \$2 million for study of interactive health games.

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January 15, 2009 Santa Barbara, Calif.

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Health Games Research, an \$8.25-million national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Pioneer Portfolio, announced today its 2009 call for proposals. Health Games Research will award grants to researchers working to improve the quality of interactive health games and increase the impact of health games on players' health behaviors and outcomes. A total of \$2 million will be awarded in grants ranging from \$100,000 to \$300,000.

Researchers from a wide variety of fields and experience levels are invited to submit proposals, which will be accepted until April 8, 2009, at 3:00 p.m. EDT.

"The projects supported by Health Games Research will provide new approaches to the design of health games and evidence of their power to motivate health behavior change. Research findings that emerge from our funded projects will be useful to health professionals, game developers, educators, policy-makers and other decision-makers who want to understand how games and game technologies could improve people's health," said Debra Lieberman, Ph.D., director of Health Games Research and a communication researcher for the Institute for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Research at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB). "Our grantees are discovering valuable evidence-based

The Pioneer Portfolio has launched Pioneering Ideas, a blog for RWJF staff, grantees and other innovators to share breakthrough ideas for health and health care. Here are several recent entries:

- A Project ECHO Announcement
- A Round-Up From Our Blog Roll
- What's New on the Pioneer Blog?
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- Can Green Cleaning Products Prevent and Control HAIs?

design strategies that can be implemented in future games to make them more effective; for instance, how to motivate game players to become more physically active or how to enhance their skills, self-confidence and drive to improve their prevention and self-care behaviors.”

In 2008, Health Games Research awarded a total of more than \$2 million in grants to 12 research teams across the country. These grantees are currently leading research projects ranging from the study of how games and virtual worlds can help patients in substance abuse recovery programs strengthen their real-world relapse-prevention behaviors to how social mobile games can improve adolescents’ healthy eating habits.

“The popularity of interactive games continues to grow, and we know that they have the potential to do so much more than entertain,” said Paul Tarini, M.A., director of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Pioneer Portfolio. “Health Games Research is conducting industry-leading work that could spur the development of innovations with the potential to become breakthrough health and health care solutions.”

For more information about Health Games Research and its grantees, visit www.healthgamesresearch.org.

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. The Foundation's Pioneer Portfolio supports innovative ideas and projects that may trigger important breakthroughs in health and health care. Projects in the Pioneer Portfolio are future-oriented and look beyond conventional thinking to explore solutions at the cutting edge of health and health care. 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.

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Publication information

Publication Date:

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Type of Publication:

- News releases

Program Areas:

- Pioneer

The University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) is one of 10 universities in the University of California system, and is one of only 62 research-intensive institutions elected to membership in the prestigious Association of American Universities. The distinguished 980-member faculty includes five Nobel Prize winners and scores of elected members or fellows of elite national academies and associations. The campus is also home to 12 national centers and institutes, eight of them sponsored by the National Science Foundation. *U.S. News and World Report's* guide, "America's Best Colleges," ranks UCSB number 12 among all public universities in the nation. For more information, visit www.ucsb.edu.

UCSB's Institute for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Research (ISBER) brings together researchers from many academic disciplines in order to foster collaboration and span the boundaries between the social and behavioral sciences, the humanities, and the physical and biological sciences. For more information, visit www.isber.ucsb.edu.

The *Health Games Research* national program office at UCSB conducts and supports research to enhance the quality and impact of interactive games used to improve health. For more information, visit www.healthgamesresearch.org.

Contacts for Journalists

Shannon Varroney

svarroney@golinharris.com

Office: (847) 477-0622

Gina Ivey

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

media@rwjf.org

Office: (609) 627-5937

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