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Alumna Named Robert Wood Johnson Foundation ‘Nurse Faculty Scholar’

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Shannon Zenk '95, an Illinois Wesleyan University School of Nursing alumna, has been named a Nurse Faculty Scholar with the prestigious Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). The Nurse Faculty Scholars program aims to strengthen the academic productivity and overall excellence of nursing schools by developing the next generation of national leaders in academic nursing.

Zenk, who is currently an assistant professor at the College of Nursing at the University of Illinois at Chicago, won the competitive grant for her studies of how social factors influence rates of obesity in vulnerable populations. She is one of just 12 nurse educators from around the country to receive the three-year \$350,000 Nurse Faculty Scholar award this year.

With the grant, Zenk will continue her research, which focuses on the contributions of neighborhood physical and social environments to racial and socioeconomic inequalities in health.

“I am honored to receive this award,” Zenk told the RWJF. “The support I receive will give me the time and mentoring that I need to address gaps in knowledge about how daily stressors interact with the environment to affect obesity risk.” Zenk noted a major focus of her work is examining relationships between the neighborhood food availability, access and intake among urban adult populations. She is involved in community-based participatory research (CBPR) partnerships in Detroit and Chicago.

The *Nurse Faculty Scholars* program, which is funded by the RWJF, is administered through the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing.

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