

# Project HealthDesign

Rethinking the Power and Potential of Personal Health Records

[www.projecthealthdesign.org](http://www.projecthealthdesign.org)



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

## Who We Are

*Project HealthDesign* is a \$5 million national program designed to support health and information technology pioneers in creating a new generation of personal health record (PHR) systems that can share common technical functions. The project is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Pioneer Portfolio, which funds innovative ideas that may lead to future breakthroughs in health and health care, with additional support from the California HealthCare Foundation.

*Project HealthDesign* funded nine multidisciplinary teams to develop PHR applications that extend and enhance the range of services offered by existing PHRs. Through creative use of information technology that is guided by extensive user-centered design activities, this bold new program provides a variety of tools and services that draw on clinical records and relevant information from people's daily lives. The Project HealthDesign teams' PHR applications go beyond providing access to health information to interpret consumers' health data and provide customized, easy-to-use feedback that can guide daily health decisions and empower consumers to manage their health more effectively. The grantees' prototypes are now being tested by patients and families to help them manage complex health data, improve their health and get the care they need. Complementing the individual work of each team, technical specialists created a common platform of computer resources that will make it easier and more efficient in the future to build highly tailored PHR tools.

## National Program Contact

Patricia Flatley Brennan, R.N., Ph.D.  
National Program Director  
Project HealthDesign  
National Program Office  
University of Wisconsin—Madison  
School of Nursing  
600 Highland Avenue, CSC H6/297  
Madison, WI 53792

Linda Brei, Communications Liaison  
(608) 263-5250  
[lgbrei@wisc.edu](mailto:lgbrei@wisc.edu)

[www.projecthealthdesign.org](http://www.projecthealthdesign.org)

## Project Contact

Barbara Massoudi, M.P.H., Ph.D.  
Senior Research Health Scientist  
RTI International  
2951 Flowers Rd., Suite 119  
Atlanta, GA 30341  
(770) 986-5062  
[bmassoudi@rti.org](mailto:bmassoudi@rti.org)

## The Challenge

The American Heart Association recommends 30 minutes of moderately intense physical activity five days a week or vigorous physical activity for 20 minutes three days a week. Unfortunately, many Americans aren't in the habit of getting any physical activity at all. The *Project HealthDesign* RTI International team, working with The Cooper Institute, hopes to change that. They are developing a personal health record (PHR) application to help sedentary adults with or without chronic diseases to become more physically active. Through a Web portal, individuals can input personalized information on their activity level and lifestyle and then receive a customized plan of activities designed to increase their activity level within the context of their daily routines. Advice tailored to their life style and habits may include, for example, taking the stairs rather than the elevator or parking a bit further from the office. The emphasis is on personalized, small changes to people's daily lives that can realistically be achieved, augmented and sustained.

## The Solution: Where We Are Now

To shape a consumer-driven vision of this PHR application, approximately 30 middle-aged adult "end-users" in the general population and a small group of health care providers—including physicians, nurses, physical therapists and personal trainers—participated in three design sessions. Input from these sessions fed directly in to the team's design of an online template that employs a proven behavior change strategy to help sedentary adults incorporate activity in to their daily routines. All aspects of the system, including the look and feel, technology specifications, and scenarios of typical interaction will be tested with likely users, and the system will be modified based on input from their evaluations. In the next stage of the project, the RTI team will add additional components to the PHR application, including a calendar function, customizable fields for users to report their physical activity levels, and a report generator to notify family and friends of an individual's progress. Since the tool encourages involvement by the individual's social network, keeping family and friends informed can be an important factor in keeping users of the tool motivated and sustaining healthy changes. Enhancements to the messaging component of the system will allow for reminders, updates to forms and ongoing assessment.