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**EMBARGO for April 29, 2008**

**Contacts:**

*Jewish Healthcare Foundation*

*Pamela Gaynor*

412-594-2581 | [gaynor@jhf.org](mailto:gaynor@jhf.org)

*United Way of Allegheny County*

*Cally Jamis Vennare*

412.600.5055 | [cjvennare@comcast.net](mailto:cjvennare@comcast.net)

**Jewish Healthcare Foundation and United Way of Allegheny County launch  
“Pathways to Health Careers Fellowship”**

Pittsburgh, PA, April 29, 2008—The Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) and United Way of Allegheny County today unveiled a joint initiative to help the region’s community-based organizations enhance career education opportunities for at-risk youth.

Under the *Pathways to Health Careers Fellowship*, staffs of community-based organizations offering career preparation for underprivileged middle school and high school students can receive training and other resources to improve their programming.

The initiative is the latest in a broad-based campaign that three civic organizations have mounted to prepare Pittsburgh’s workforce of the future by aligning schools, employers and youth development agencies around career preparation. More than a year ago, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development launched a campaign known as the *Pittsburgh Compact*. Since then, Health Careers Futures, an operating arm of JHF, launched the *Center for Career Learning* to further school and community partnerships and United Way declared “Motivating Kids to Succeed in School” as a major initiative and funding priority.

Now, in partnership to further mutual objectives, JHF and United Way have developed a fellowship program to encourage community-based organizations to adopt best practices from around the country to help students identify, explore, experience and prepare for careers. Although the fellowship will focus on health careers, the region’s largest industry sector, much of the training and information provided will have broad applicability.

Engaging students in career choices as early as possible may be one of the most important ways of stemming a drop-out rate that the *Editorial Projects in Education Research Center* earlier this month estimated at 30 percent nationwide.

"We cannot afford to lose kids who don't complete high school or don't get the fundamental skill sets," said Dave Malone, President and Chief Executive Officer of Gateway Financial.

Malone, who also chairs HCF, the Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board, the Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board and the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce and serves on the boards of the Allegheny Conference and JHF, added, "Many young people are not inspired to succeed because they don't understand the connection between formal education, a meaningful career, and long-term security, career satisfaction, and prosperity."

Dr. Karen Wolk Feinstein, CEO of JHF and HCF, noted that stimulating interest in technical and professional schools would fill critical vacancies for the region's industries, while positioning students for rewarding career pathways that don't necessarily require college degrees.

JHF's board in April approved up to \$200,000 in funding to support the Fellowship over two years. United Way has committed \$150,000.

"Our community-based organizations play a vital role in providing students with career education and helping them succeed in school," said United Way President Robert Nelkin. "This Fellowship program will build the effectiveness of these programs."

There are 446 after-school programs in Allegheny County; a limited number of these programs focus on providing career development opportunities. Preliminary findings from a survey of these organizations indicated they may lack staff expertise in career education as well as adequate evaluation tools to determine how successful their programs are in helping students find career paths.

The design for the fellowship drew on conclusions from a framing paper for an unprecedented national summit, *High Schools and Careers: The New Value Proposition*, held in Pittsburgh on April 29<sup>th</sup>.

HCF hosted the Summit, which drew some of the foremost national experts in career education to devise concrete models for career education. Separate working groups considered decision pathways, building blocks, best-of-class existing models, and milestones to measure career preparation progress for each student.

Support for the event came from JHF, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Lumina Foundation for Education, the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, The Pittsburgh Foundation and the Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board.

**The Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF)** is a public charity formed with proceeds from the sale of Montefiore Hospital to support and foster the provision of healthcare services, healthcare education and medical and scientific research, and to respond to the medical, custodial and other health-related needs of elderly, underprivileged and underserved populations in the Jewish community and throughout Western Pennsylvania. JHF fulfills its mission through grants and through the activities of two supporting organizations, *Health Careers Futures* and the *Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative*. [www.jhf.org](http://www.jhf.org); [www.hcfutures.org](http://www.hcfutures.org); [www.prhi.org](http://www.prhi.org)

**The United Way of Allegheny County** is a change agent and efficient community fundraiser that improves lives by addressing critical community needs. By convening diverse partners and investing in programs and people to advance solutions, United Way creates long-lasting change and helps children and youth succeed, strengthens and supports families by promoting financial stability, and ensures the safety and well-being of vulnerable seniors. [www.unitedwaypittsburgh.org](http://www.unitedwaypittsburgh.org)