

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“HOLD THE SMOKE!”

DURHAM LEADERS LAUNCH COUNTYWIDE SMOKE-FREE RESTAURANT INITIATIVE

(DURHAM, NC) – Durham’s leading community leaders, public health champions and restaurateurs kicked off the “Breathe Easy Durham” campaign, honoring eating establishments that have voluntarily adopted smoke-free policies at a news conference held today at Trin-bago Caribbean Restaurant in Durham. The “Breathe Easy Durham” campaign is sponsored by the Durham County Health Department as part of its Teen Tobacco Use Prevention grant, which is funded by HWTF.

NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) Commissioner Mary Ann E. Black and Ellen Reckhow, chair of the Durham County Board of County Commissioners, unveiled a new door decal and applauded smoke-free restaurant owners at the news conference. Reyn Bowman, president of the Durham Convention & Visitors Bureau, announced the hospitality industry’s support for smoke-free dining with the unveiling of a list of local smoke-free restaurants on the Durham Convention & Visitors Bureau Web site: www.durham-nc.com.

“The Health and Wellness Trust Fund strongly supports the commitment of all restaurant owners who understand the health benefits that come as a result of making their establishments smoke-free,” said Alison K. McLaurin, HWTF’s public affairs and marketing director.

The “Breathe Easy Durham” event also recognized the more than 150 local restaurant owners who have voluntarily chosen to make their establishments smoke-free. Durham County joins Alamance, Orange, Wake and several other counties across the state in its support of smoke-free dining initiatives.

“We are proud the role that the “Breathe Easy Durham” campaign and our teen tobacco use prevention grantee, the Durham Co. Health Dept., have played in serving as a catalyst to jumpstart this important work and promote healthy lifestyles,” said McLaurin.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, more than 2,200 North Carolinians die each year from exposure to second-hand smoke. In a recent Gallup poll, support for banning smoking in restaurants has increased since 2003 from 45 percent to 54 percent—the first time a majority of Americans favor a total smoking ban.

ABOUT THE NC HEALTH AND WELLNESS TRUST FUND:

The NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund makes North Carolina stronger, both physically and economically, by funding programs that promote preventive health. Created by the General Assembly in 2000 to allocate a portion of North Carolina’s share of the national tobacco settlement, HWTF has invested \$125 million to support preventive health initiatives and \$78 million to fund a prescription drug assistance program for seniors. For more information, please visit www.hwtfc.org.

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