

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund announces availability of grants to reduce tobacco use among NC college students

(Raleigh, NC) – The NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) announces the availability of \$ 1.7 million over two years in grant funding to combat tobacco use among students in the state's colleges, universities and community colleges. The awarding of these college grants represents the expansion of HWTF's teen tobacco prevention and cessation efforts and will be the first statewide effort to prevent and reduce tobacco use among college students. In North Carolina, almost 28% of 18-24 year olds smoke. The American Cancer Society reports that this is the only age group in which smoking rates are rising rather than falling.

Starting today, HWTF will accept applications from eligible organizations who seek to work on college and university campuses to prevent initiation of tobacco use, promote tobacco use cessation, and eliminate tobacco-related health disparities among college students ages 18-24. In addition, funds may be used to eliminate exposure to second hand tobacco smoke on college and community colleges campuses.

"I am pleased that we are working towards expanding our teen tobacco use prevention and cessation program to include our state's college student population," said Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue, HWTF chair, "Too many of our young people are entering our colleges and universities where they are being introduced to tobacco products and exposed to second-hand smoke. We must do what we can to educate them about the dangers of tobacco use."

North Carolina is among the few states that has increased rather than decreased funding for tobacco prevention in recent years, and as a result, has moved up significantly in ranking to 21st nationally for state funding. Tobacco use has been identified as the number one preventable cause of premature death and disease in the country.

Organizations are eligible to receive an HWTF grant if they fit into any of the following categories:

- *A state agency*
- *A local government or other political subdivision of the state, or a combination of such entities*
- *A nonprofit organization which has a significant purpose promoting the public's health, limiting youth access to tobacco products, or reducing the health consequences of tobacco use*

Grant proposals will be accepted from existing HWTF grantees as well as other NC organizations not currently receiving HWTF funding. Interested applicants can obtain a copy of the Request for Proposal and submit an online application by visiting HWTF's Web site at www.hwtfc.org. **Applications will be accepted until April 28, 2005 at 5:00 p.m.**

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 \$127 million to support preventive health initiatives and \$78 million to fund a prescription drug assistance program. For more information, please visit www.hwtfc.org.

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