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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
NEWS ADVISORY
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Teens Promote Healthier American Indian Communities at Advocacy Workshop

(Pembroke, NC) – One hundred and twenty American Indian youth and community leaders from across the state will come together today at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke to participate in the first ever workshop on tobacco-free policies in American Indian communities. The goal of the retreat is to promote healthier environments by empowering them to work towards implementation of tobacco-free policies that would result in the reduction of their exposure to second hand smoke.

The one-day workshop will kick-off with a presentation by the Lumbee Indian Youth Drum Circle, followed by workshops on tobacco-free schools and communities; youth empowerment; media advocacy; and second-hand smoke. The workshop is a collaborative effort between American Indian tribes and the faith community. Tobacco use in American Indian communities continues to be of great interest to community leaders since ceremonial and medicinal use of tobacco has been a longstanding tradition. Organizers hope to demonstrate the difference between ceremonial tobacco use and tobacco use by choice or habit.

The *Tobacco-Free Advocacy Workshop* is part of a statewide initiative to prevent the usage of tobacco and increase cessation among American Indian youth in North Carolina. This workshop is sponsored by: a grant from the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund; Many Voices, One Message: Stop Tobacco Addiction Initiative; and the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina: Teen Cessation and Prevention Project; and supported by the Home, Heritage & Health Faith Initiative, the American Indian Hope and Honor Program, and the Public Schools of Robeson County: Teen Tobacco Prevention Team.

Interview and Photo Opportunities

Friday, July 30, 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

UNC-Pembroke, James B. Chavis Center – Pembroke, NC

Contact Chris Shigas (919) 235-8115 to schedule interviews

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 \$55 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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