

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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HWTF CHAIR LT. GOV. BEVERLY PERDUE LEADS BROAD CONSENSUS FOR ADDRESSING CHILDHOOD OBESITY

*Schools, Health Advocates, and Vending Industry Work Together to
Improve Nutrition and Physical Activity in Schools*

(CARY, NC) – Lt. Governor Beverly Perdue, chair of the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF), will announce policy recommendations for physical activity and nutrition standards in North Carolina schools that were recently adopted by HWTF's Study Committee on Childhood Obesity. The recommendations will be released at a luncheon sponsored by the NC Healthy Schools Initiative on Thursday, March 24, 2005 at the Embassy Suites in Cary.

Fit Families NC: a Study Committee for Childhood Overweight/Obesity, was established by HWTF in 2003 to evaluate the status of obesity among the state's children, and to recommend policy changes necessary for addressing this growing epidemic. The study committee, co-chaired by Sen. Bill Purcell (D-Scotland County), Rep. Verla Insko (D-Orange County) and HWTF Commissioner Dr. Olson Huff, is comprised of 19 health care experts, youth advocates, educators, and business leaders from across the state.

Last year, the study committee held meetings around the state and heard from key stakeholders about school standards on physical activity and nutrition; childcare; city planning; and health care issues as they relate to childhood obesity. Lt. Gov. Perdue will be releasing the seven legislative policy recommendations that were adopted by the Study Committee and developed with input from school, public health and industry representatives.

The legislative recommendations of the Study Committee include:

- North Carolina schools - K through 8th grade should provide at least 30 minutes of physical activity per day for all students in attendance that day. Schools can reach these minute requirements through their regular PE program or activities such as recess, dance, classroom energizers or other activity-based curriculum.
- Removing sugar carbonated soft drinks from middle schools and significantly reducing their availability in high schools. In addition, the committee recommends that all school vending locations offer water. The committee also recommends removing all snack vending from elementary schools and requiring that seventy-five percent of snack vending in middle and high schools be less than 200 calories per portion.
- Improving nutrition standards for a la carte items, school meals and food offered at school events.

"These recommendations are just the first step in bringing together schools, public health and industry to address these critical issues," said Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue, HWTF chair. "We must continue to work together to ensure that these recommendations are enacted."

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.