

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**July 13, 2005**

## ***HEALTH ADVOCATES, LEADERS GATHER FOR FIRST-EVER CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTING BEST PRACTICES***

### ***HWTF Chair Lt. Governor Beverly Perdue Addresses Achievements Made in Teen Tobacco Use Prevention***

**(WINSTON-SALEM)** – Top health advocates, educators, mental health and substance abuse professionals from around North Carolina are gathered to attend the state’s first ever “Best Practices in Substance Abuse Prevention” conference today through Friday. Lt. Governor Beverly Perdue, chair of the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF), will deliver a keynote address, “Winning the Battle to Reduce Teen Tobacco Use in NC!” at **1:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 14, at the Adam’s Mark Hotel & Resort in the B.H. Gaines Ballroom** (lower level).

Lt. Gov. Perdue’s remarks will highlight the successes of HWTF’s Teen Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation Initiative, which includes the launch of North Carolina’s first state funded quitline in August as well as statewide activities to promote the local adoption of a 100% Tobacco Free Schools policy in all of North Carolina’s 115 school districts. Lt. Gov. Perdue’s address comes on the heels of the announcement last week that more than half of the state’s schools districts have adopted such a policy.

“North Carolina has made tremendous strides over the past year in the area of teen tobacco use prevention,” said Alison K. McLaurin, HWTF’s marketing and public affairs director. “This conference gives North Carolina’s public health leaders a chance to share amongst themselves what programs are making a positive difference in the lives of our young people.”

The three-day conference offer seminars and presentations to promote best practices, evidence-based programs, and environmental strategies in the areas of substance abuse prevention, tobacco control and reduction of underage drinking. In addition, a closing awards ceremony will honor volunteers, youth, professionals and programs that have made special efforts in alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention.

Other teen tobacco-related presentations include:

“Promoting 100% Tobacco Free Schools in North Carolina” – Presenters: Robert Parker (HWTF Commissioner and NC Baptist Hospital); Mark Ezzell (Director, 100% Tobacco Free Schools Program); Jim Martin (State Advisor, NC Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch): **Thursday, July 14, 2005 - 10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. – Ardmore I (Lower Level)**

“Youth Empowerment & Working Effectively with Youth (Part I & II)” – Presenters: Jeanne Dairaghi (Question Why Youth Empowerment Center – Western Region); Steve Johnson (Question Why Youth Empowerment Center – Eastern Region): **Thursday, July 14, 2005 – Part I, 2:15 – 3:30 p.m. & Part II 3:45 – 5:00 p.m. – Ardmore III (Lower Level)**

“Working Effectively with Law Enforcement and Retailers to Prevent Tobacco/Alcohol Sales to Minors” – Presenters: John Simmons (Alcohol Law Enforcement); Lynn Inman (Alamance-Caswell LME); Kim Sexton Lewter (UNC – Greensboro); Chris Neal (Short Stop Food Marts); Rhonda Demello (Harris Teeter): **Friday, July 15, 2005 – 10:45 – 12:00 p.m. – Ardmore I (Lower Level)**

#### **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 seniors. For more information, please visit [www.hwtfc.org](http://www.hwtfc.org).