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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund Announces New Health Disparities Fellows**

**(Raleigh, NC)** – The NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) has selected the second class of fellows for the NC Health Disparities Fellowship Program. The program engages a group of mid- to senior-level public health or social work professionals from North Carolina through training on how to effectively design, implement and evaluate interventions that address the complex issues contributing to health disparities. Each fellow will select an intervention or project that will be implemented in their community.

“We are proud of our first group of fellows for taking on the challenge of addressing health disparities through effective community-based and statewide projects, and we are pleased to be able to offer the fellowships once again,” said Vandana Shah, HWTF Executive Director. “Engaging talented professionals in the effort to increase the cultural competency of health care providers is vital for closing the health disparities gap.”

Fellows selected for the second class are:

- **Deborah Bailey** is the director of the Academic Community Service Learning Program at North Carolina Central University. Bailey’s proposed project emphasizes an interdisciplinary approach to community engagement and service learning with underserved communities.
- **Leslie deRosset** is the Latino campaign coordinator for the NC Folic Acid Campaign of the March of Dimes. DeRosset plans to develop, implement and evaluate a collaborative preconception intervention for Hispanic women.
- **Cheryl Emanuel** is the community health administrator and division manager of the Mecklenburg County Health Department. Emanuel’s proposed project focuses on creating and implementing a more integrated approach to health service delivery in Mecklenburg County.
- **Jessica Gavett** is the project institutional review board coordinator for FirstHealth of the Carolinas. Gavett seeks to develop a community-based intervention to reduce health inequalities in access to care and in rates of cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.
- **Deborah Maxwell** is the Brunswick County Health Department’s child service coordinator and social work supervisor. Maxwell proposes to work on a culturally appropriate diabetes and obesity prevention intervention for African-Americans.
- **Debra Richardson** is the executive director of the Guilford Community AIDS Partnership. Richardson plans to develop a community HIV prevention program for African-Americans, emphasizing innovative collaborations between faith-based and public health organizations.

The fellowship is one part of HWTF’s statewide, multi-pronged Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative, toward which \$21 million has been allocated. The fellowship program is funded by HWTF and is implemented by the Duke Global Health Institute. Fellows were selected from a pool of applicants across North Carolina.

The second class of the NC Health Disparities Fellowship Program begins Feb. 22 at Duke University and will participate in four curriculum modules over a 10-month period, including one session at North Carolina Central University and one at East Carolina University. This first module will provide fellows with an overview of health disparities in North Carolina, a review of tools used in community-level health disparities assessment and strategies to address these disparities. The new class will complement HWTF’s first class of fellows, all of whom have begun working on health projects in their communities.

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### **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 \$199 million to support preventive health initiatives and \$116 million to fund prescription drug assistance programs. For more information, please visit [www.HealthWellNC.com](http://www.HealthWellNC.com).*

### **ABOUT THE DUKE GLOBAL HEALTH INSTITUTE**

*Duke University established the Duke Global Health Institute in November 2006 to address health disparities around the world and in our own community. The Institute works with faculty and students from all nine schools at Duke University (undergraduate, graduate and professional) to study and respond to global health issues from a multidisciplinary perspective. The Institute considers not only the diseases that cause health disparities, but the social determinants of these diseases, such as poverty, gender, environment and globalization. [www.globalhealth.duke.edu](http://www.globalhealth.duke.edu).*

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