

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund Launches Fit Family Pilot Campaign
Greenville-New Bern test market for new childhood obesity prevention effort

Raleigh, N.C. – Starting today, the North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) will launch a brand new media campaign in the Greenville-New Bern television market as part of its childhood obesity prevention initiative. HWTF's Fit Family campaign is one of the first state-sponsored social marketing campaigns in the nation to address childhood obesity and will speak to parents of children ages 3 to 10 through ads designed to appeal to children as well as parents.

North Carolina is among the states with the worst childhood obesity rates in the U.S., ranking 5th in the nation. A number of factors contribute to this grave situation, including:

- Only 36% of children in North Carolina get three or more servings of fruits or vegetables each day (five or more are recommended).
- Less than half of NC children get at least one hour of physical activity each day.
- 45% of children watch 2-4 hours of television each day.

"Obesity, especially among children, is a serious threat to the health of our state and nation," said Gov. Bev Perdue. "This campaign tackles the issue head on, building on work that began when I formed the Study Committee on Childhood Obesity in 2003. Together, we can prevent childhood obesity and reduce adult obesity with the kinds of healthful lifestyle changes promoted through this timely campaign."

The Fit Family effort is the latest in a series of 'Fit' programs funded by HWTF in response to recommendations of the Study Committee on Childhood Obesity: *Fit Community*, *Fit Together*, *Fit Kids* and *A+ Fit Schools*. The other programs focus on environmental and policy changes that support increased physical activity and improved nutrition. The Fit Family effort is the first to focus directly on individual changes in behavior that are linked to childhood obesity.

"Promoting fitness requires changes in our daily behaviors," said Dr. Chuck Willson, HWTF Commission chair. "The Fit Family campaign really brings this message home to parents in North Carolina."

The campaign's tag line, "*5-2-1 Almost None – Fit Family*" is intended to remind parents and children of the four key behaviors that are being promoted through the ads – the campaign's "secret formula" for becoming a fit family. The campaign features "Professor Wisely" and his assistant, "Zedo," life-size puppet characters who share the Professor's secret formula of healthful behaviors: eating at least **five** servings of fruits/vegetables daily, limiting television screen time to no more than **two** hours a day, increasing physical activity to at least **one** hour a day, and consuming **almost no** sugary beverages.

Parents are encouraged to visit the campaign's Web site (www.FitFamilyNC.com) for more information. Parents and children are welcomed on the Web site's home page by Professor Wisely and Zedo, and the Web site offers a section for parents as well as a playground section for children, including educational games such as "What's in Your Lunch?" and a coloring book with the puppet characters to reinforce campaign messages.

The pilot campaign will be evaluated through pre- and post-campaign surveys by the University of North Carolina's Tobacco Prevention and Evaluation Program at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Medicine. The pilot will need to demonstrate campaign effectiveness before additional funds are invested for a statewide launch.

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.

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