



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **NC's Obesity Prevention Initiative Unveils New Campaign**

*New Web site, Ads Link North Carolinians to Tools for Healthier Weight and Lifestyles*

**Raleigh, NC** – Fit Together, one of the most comprehensive state obesity prevention campaigns in the nation, unveiled a new Web site on Tuesday as well as advertisements that begin running throughout North Carolina this week.

Fit Together is unique in its emphasis on both individual and community action to prevent obesity and in the way it connects individuals to local resources. Reflecting this approach, the new Web site, [www.FitTogetherNC.org](http://www.FitTogetherNC.org), features:

- A step-by-step roadmap on how individuals can make positive changes in their cities and towns based on success stories from other NC communities working to prevent obesity and promote healthy lifestyles.
- Information on local resources such as fitness programs, exercise facilities and counseling on nutrition and healthcare.
- An easy way for individuals to assess their health and that of their family.

Fit Together, a three-year public-private partnership between the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC), also unveiled new TV, print, radio and Internet ads as well as the results of a statewide poll.

The ads spotlight local North Carolina programs successfully taking a community approach to better health. These programs offer lessons for other communities that want to promote healthy lifestyles. The programs featured in the ad campaign (and on the Web site) include:

- New Hanover County, where physical education is a priority again in public schools.
- Robeson County, where church groups help people shop smart and eat right.
- The Triangle, where employers use wellness programs to help improve the bottom line.
- Salisbury, where new sidewalks offer residents more opportunities for physical activity.
- Asheville, where the WNC Farmers Market offers healthy eating choices.

“Overweight and obesity is estimated to cost NC taxpayers over \$2 billion annually in preventable health care costs \*,” said Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue, HWTF chair. “Obesity prevention requires both a role for individuals and a role for the community. Our new Web site provides valuable tools for both. I believe Fit Together’s Web site will inspire and equip communities across North Carolina to learn from each other by sharing success stories and lessons learned, so that we can all get fit together.”

\* Source: 2004 Study – RTI International and CDC – Eric A. Finkelstein and Ian C. Fiebelkorn. RTI International, and Guijing Wang, CDC.

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A new statewide survey commissioned by Fit Together indicates that 92 percent of North Carolinians believe overweight/obesity to be a serious problem. Seventy-eight percent would like to see their towns and cities take a community approach to the problem using lessons learned from successful prevention programs in other areas of the state.

“Obesity is the public health challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, much like smoking was the health crisis of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century,” said Bob Greczyn, president and CEO of BCBSNC. “North Carolina is particularly challenged. More than half of the members of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina are overweight or obese. Fit Together’s first television spot and print ad will highlight successful community-based obesity prevention programs around the state so that all North Carolinians can get a sense of what’s possible and how to succeed.”

The TV ads highlighting outstanding community programs will play through the end of the year during news and primetime programming on broadcast and cable networks.

To learn more about Fit Together and how to make healthy lifestyle choices, visit our Web site at [www.FitTogetherNC.org](http://www.FitTogetherNC.org).

Experts will be available for phone interviews on November 16:

- BCBSNC Chief Medical Officer **Dr. Robert Harris** will be available for interviews.
- HWTF Executive Director **Jim Davis** will be available for interviews regarding Fit Together’s philosophy and approach.
- **Keith Frederick**, President of FREDERICKpolls will be available to discuss the statewide survey conducted by his opinion research firm.

### **About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina**

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina is a leader in delivering innovative health care products, services and information to approximately 3 million members, including approximately 500,000 served on behalf of other Blue plans. The company offers its members the Blue Extras<sup>SM</sup> value-added programs, which provide discounts and information on a wide variety of health-related services at no additional cost. BCBSNC also offers life, dental, long-term care and disability insurance products. For 70 years, the company has served its customers by offering access to quality health care at a competitive price and has served the people of North Carolina through support of community organizations, programs and events that promote good health. BCBSNC’s HMO and POS products have earned Excellent Accreditation from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), an independent, not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of health care delivered to people everywhere. BCBSNC also has North Carolina’s first and only NCQA accredited PPO plan – Blue Options<sup>SM</sup>. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Access BCBSNC online at [www.bcsnc.com](http://www.bcsnc.com).

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