

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NC's TEEN TOBACCO PREVENTION EFFORTS MAKING GREAT STRIDES

A STATEMENT FROM LT. GOV. BEVERLY PERDUE

Raleigh, NC – North Carolina has made tremendous strides in its efforts to prevent young people from using tobacco products and is on the right track to build on its successes, says Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue.

The NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF), which funds our state's teen tobacco prevention initiative, has experts on hand to answer any questions about its efforts or a report issued today by the American Lung Association (ALA). ALA's evaluation categories are broad and in many cases beyond the scope of HWTF's work.

To clarify NC's efforts and successes, Lt. Gov. Perdue, chair of HWTF, issued a statement this morning:

The NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund's teen tobacco prevention efforts have found the resolve and resources to win admirers and, most importantly, to save lives. Our mission is to prevent teens from using tobacco products, and on that score, we are making great strides.

HWTF has increased funding for its teen tobacco prevention initiative, moving from #30 in the nation to #21 today, according to the national Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. We've gone from \$6 million per year in 2002 to \$15 million per year starting in 2005. Our funding decisions are based on recommendations from experts at UNC Family Medicine.

We've put a priority on supporting local efforts to make all of North Carolina's public schools 100 percent tobacco-free. A tobacco-free school policy (TFS) prohibits tobacco use by anyone, anywhere, anytime on school property. Since 2000, 46 of our 115 school districts have gone 100 percent tobacco free – 32 just since 2002.

HWTF supports the efforts of NC's Alcohol Law Enforcement division to ensure that retailers aren't selling tobacco products to minors. In 2003-04, ALE conducted more than 10,000 compliance checks. HWTF also supports the Tobacco-Enforcement Excellence (TEE) Award to recognize retailers who obey the law.

Through these efforts and others, the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund is on the right track to keeping our children tobacco-free.

ABOUT TRU

Tobacco. Reality. Unfiltered., commonly known as **TRU**, is North Carolina's first-ever statewide youth tobacco prevention multi-media campaign that uses testimonials of real North Carolina teens as well as hard-hitting facts to dissuade young people from using tobacco. This campaign is part of the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund's (HWTF) teen tobacco use prevention initiative. Funded at \$28 million from HWTF, this grassroots initiative includes the **TRU** media campaign, as well as a grant program including 70 grants (50 community-based grants, 4 statewide grants and 16 tobacco free school mini-grants) to a total of 55 organizations. To find out more about **TRU**, please visit www.realityunfiltered.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.

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