



**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
HEALTH AND WELLNESS TRUST FUND COMMISSION**

**MICHAEL EASLEY
GOVERNOR**

**BEVERLY EAVES PERDUE, CHAIR
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
NOVEMBER 4, 2003**

**CONTACT:
VANDANA SHAH (919) 733-4011**

Commission awards \$7.43 million in grants to fight childhood obesity in NC

The NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund Commission today announced 17 grants totaling \$7.43 million, to be used over the next three years as part of a statewide campaign to address the epidemic of obesity among children and youth in North Carolina. "Obesity is poised to replace tobacco use as the number one cause of preventable disease in North Carolina," said Lieutenant Governor Beverly Perdue, who chairs the Commission. "Research shows that obesity overwhelmingly tends to begin in childhood and is carried into adulthood, often with devastating consequences for long term health."

The Commission awarded \$5 million in grants to 12 local organizations that will serve schools and communities in 19 counties initially, then expanding to 35 counties within a year. Another 4 grants, totaling \$1.7 million were awarded to organizations that will provide service on a regional or statewide basis. The remainder of the funds were allocated for technical support and training services for the grantees, which will be provided by the Duke University Medical Center, Department of Community and Family Medicine.

Grant funds will be used to provide intervention programs for overweight children including after school exercise programs and nutritional counseling. Grantees will also focus efforts on public education and adoption of local policies that address the underlying issues. A social marketing campaign will be developed to communicate effectively with minority communities, where the problem is especially acute. UNC-TV will participate by creating and airing messages on its statewide network to reach both at-risk youth and their caregivers. "These grants will fund effective grassroots efforts in an attempt to reach our youth and communities and help them lead healthier and more productive lives," added Beverly Perdue.

Called the Children, Youth and Community Obesity Prevention / Reduction Initiative, the Commission designed its program around guidelines issued by the NC Division of Public Health in its "Eat Smart, Move More...North Carolina" blueprint for social change. A list of grant recipients and a map showing their service areas can be found on the Commission's website: www.hwtfc.org.

The Health and Wellness Trust Fund Commission was established by the General Assembly to receive and allocate 25% of North Carolina's share of the multi-billion dollar national tobacco settlement agreement reached in 1999. The Commission is comprised of 18 individuals representing a wide background of health care experience throughout North Carolina.

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**Children, Youth and Community Obesity Prevention/Reduction Initiative
Grants Awarded to Local Regional and State Organizations (2003)**

ORGANIZATION		COUNTIES SERVED
Be Active North Carolina, Inc.	\$330,796	Statewide
Children First of Buncombe County	\$434,283	Buncombe
Cumberland County Schools	\$445,096	Cumberland
Durham Public Schools (DPS)	\$441,945	Durham
Halifax County Health Department	\$236,362	Halifax
Mecklenburg County Health Department	\$450,000	Mecklenburg
Mitchell County Schools	\$450,000	Mitchell, Avery
NC Academy of Family Physicians	\$417,678	Statewide
New Life Women's Leadership Project	\$337,082	Martin, Washington
NC Division of Public Health	\$371,032	Statewide
(Mini-Grants to Minority Organizations)	\$147,800	
Partnership for Health, Inc.	\$442,245	Henderson
Person County Schools	\$450,000	Person
Pitt County Schools	\$449,028	Pitt
Southeastern Regional Medical Center	\$450,000	Columbus, Robeson
UNC-TV	\$449,970	Statewide
Wake Forest University School of Medicine	\$450,000	Forsyth

Project summaries are provided starting on the next page.

North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund Commission
Children, Youth and Community Obesity Prevention/Reduction Initiative
Project Summaries

Be Active North Carolina, Inc. (\$330,796)

Be Active North Carolina, Inc. will implement the "Active Steps Youth Program" in 26 elementary schools in Alleghany, Perquimans, Pender, and Wilkes Counties. They hope to extend the program to include an additional 18 elementary schools in Beaufort, Jackson and Madison Counties. The Active Steps Youth Program uses pedometers to help students set and achieve physical activity goals. Teachers in 6 of the schools will also participate in pedometer-based programming. The Be Active group is willing to provide consultation to other grantees who plan to use pedometers. These grantees may also attend Be Active trainings that take place in their region.

Children First of Buncombe County (\$434,283)

Children First of Buncombe County will partner with Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture and MANNA Food Bank for this project. The partners have designed a program called "Growing Minds - Healthy Bodies" that will target children at four elementary schools and their families. School activities will include school gardening programs, nutritious evening meals for needy children in an after-school program, and a backpack program whereby teachers will fill children's backpacks with fresh produce and other nutritious foods for kids to take home to their families on Fridays. Several activities will target the larger community, including families of the children. The team plans to implement an Electronic Benefits Transfer system at 2 local farmer's markets, which will enable food stamp recipients to use their stamps to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables. They will also expand the use of a community garden by providing meals to needy families and encouraging families to harvest their own foods from the garden.

Cumberland County Schools (\$445,096)

The Cumberland County Public Schools, Health Department, Healthy Carolinians group, and Cape Fear Valley Health Foundation will work together to implement Project Move. Each of 12 selected schools will provide after-school activity classes such as yoga, dance and kickboxing to students, family members, and school staff. "Family Fit Nights" will be open to the community and will be a chance for class participants to showcase their skills and for families to receive valuable health information. Three teachers from each of the 12 schools will be trained in active-based learning and will be responsible for designing lesson plans that incorporate physical activity into the regular classroom curriculum. They will also train other teachers to use the lesson plans, which will be compiled and distributed to all the schools in the county.

Durham Public Schools (\$441,945)

Durham County Schools, Durham County Health Department and El Centro Hispano will collaborate on this project that focuses on elementary school children and their families. The team will involve parents and school staff in conducting a health assessment of each school. The partners will work within the elementary schools to implement a physical activity program (chosen by the individual school) and to expand an existing nutrition program. After-school programs will be required to provide daily physical activity and healthy snacks. The project will involve parents and the community through presentations, health fairs and other events. The team will translate all materials into Spanish, and El Centro Hispano will incorporate childhood obesity prevention into its current programming. Finally, the project will work with health care providers by holding educational sessions and by encouraging physicians to refer patients to program activities.

Halifax County Health Department (\$236,362)

Halifax County Health Department will implement a nutrition and physical fitness program at 7 after-school sites throughout the county. The program follows an established 16-week curriculum that includes a parent education component. Program coordinators will encourage local pediatricians, school nurses and other health care providers to refer overweight children. The Health Department hopes to expand the program to additional sites in years 2 and 3 of the project.

Mecklenburg County Health Department (\$450,000)

Mecklenburg County Health Department will work with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, the YMCA, the Parks and Recreation Department and the Council for Health and Fitness to target elementary, middle and high school students. They will expand an enhanced version of Winner's Circle (including parent, teacher and student nutrition education) to 4 schools per year. They will increase enrollment in a weight management program for overweight high school students by having enrolled students market the program to their peers. They will also implement exercise and nutrition programs at after school sites that are run by the school system and the YMCA.

Mitchell County Schools (\$450,000)

Mitchell County Schools is partnering with neighboring Avery County Schools to implement an obesity prevention program aimed at elementary and middle school children. Their partners are the Toe River Health District and the Cooperative Extension Service. A health coordinator for each county will organize school-based prevention strategies including: a walking program, in-school nutrition improvements, and after-school activity programs. Three teachers will serve as Healthy Role Models, and will integrate health topics into the regular curriculum. The health coordinators will conduct specific interventions including constructing IHP's for all obese students.

NC Academy of Family Physicians Foundation (\$417,678)

The North Carolina Academy of Family Physicians Foundation will build a referral system between Family Physicians and local Cooperative Extension Agents in 60 counties. Along with partners from North Carolina PTA, Start With Your Heart, NC Department of Public Instruction, and Eat Smart-Move More, the Academy is targeting the youth population, ages 12-18, that are patients of Family Physicians in North Carolina. The team will develop a resource kit for physicians that will enable them to provide initial assessment, distribute materials, and refer patients, if appropriate, to an Extension Agent or other local resource for follow-up counseling and support. The intervention will begin with recruitment of 10 pilot counties in Year 1, 20 more in Year 2, another 30 in Year 3, and the state's remaining counties sometime after Year 3.

New Life Women's Leadership Project (\$337,082)

The New Life Women's Leadership Project is targeted at rural African American families, churches and childcare centers in Martin and Washington Counties. Their established network of Lay Health Advisors will receive training in obesity and obesity prevention, and will initiate a variety of nutrition and physical activity programs in their communities. A children/youth outreach program will include cooking classes, healthy lifestyle education and training in setting up pedometer programs. In addition, the project will establish a Local Physical Activity and Nutrition Coalition to assess the needs and assets of the two counties and to develop strategies for encouraging individual, organizational and community level change.

North Carolina Division of Public Health (\$418,832)

The North Carolina Division of Public Health - Women's and Children's Health Section and Chronic Disease Section - will conduct a pilot program for developing culturally appropriate obesity prevention interventions. This will be an effort to design and implement a social marketing intervention to increase daily physical activity and limit TV time. Specific geographic target areas will be selected based on demographics and overweight burden. The target population is African American, American Indian, and Hispanic children, ages 5-11, and their families. The three year program will develop and test specific intervention strategies based on formative research conducted in Year 1.

Partnership for Health, Inc. (\$442,245)

Partnership for Health, Inc. has partnered with the Family YMCA, the Boys and Girls Club, the Department of Public Health, and the county public schools to continue healthy lifestyle promotion in Henderson County. This is a community-wide effort that will involve elementary, middle and high schools, one charter school, as well as four African American and three Latino churches. Strategies include an after-school exercise program for at-risk students (grades K-5), a weight management program for obese kids, developing a family health series for African-American churches and Latino groups, and working in schools to implement nutrition and physical fitness modules. Community Health Ministries will develop a family health series, piloted in the Boys and Girls Club, then extended to AA churches and Latino groups. The BiPeds Task Force will promote more sidewalks, bike facilities, and biking and walking safety.

Person County Schools (\$450,000)

Person County Schools Obesity Intervention Program is focused on children ages 2-14 within the county's school system and daycares. They have enlisted a number of partners including NC Cooperative Extension Service, the County Health Department, Person Co. Parks & Recreation, the Courier Times, WKRC, the Center for Technology, and Education & Assessment. Efforts within the county schools will include implementing BMI assessments, developing health plans for overweight children, altering school menus, and training cafeteria managers. Community and family interventions will include meal education classes and health fairs. Additionally, staff from the Parks & Recreation Department will travel to churches, community groups and schools to conduct physical activity sessions for people in their own communities.

Pitt County Schools (\$449,028)

Pitt County Schools is developing physical activity and nutrition improvement program to prevent obesity in the K-5 student population. NC Agromedicine Institute, the County Health Department, and the Pitt Partners for Health will participate in the school-based programming. The program will strive to implement a policy change whereby all K-5 students will be active for 30 minutes per school day, and students in after school programs will have 60 minutes of activity per day. In addition, teachers and cafeteria workers will be trained to participate in nutrition education and cafeteria programming. The ultimate goal, along with healthier students and employees, is to achieve a formal change in county school policy by Year 3 of the program.

Southeastern Regional Medical Center (\$450,000)

Southeastern Regional Medical Center is leading a two-county initiative to empower elementary and high school youth to make healthy lifestyle choices. Columbus County Hospital, Wake Forest University School of Medicine, Public Schools of Robeson County, Whiteville Primary School and Hallsboro-Artesia Elementary School are joining the Medical Center to serve the target population. The project will follow 2 cohorts (1st and 9th graders) over 3 years to assess changes during and after implementation of multi-faceted program that targets health at the student, family, organizational and community levels. In-school interventions include incorporating physical activity and nutrition into the daily curriculum. Community intervention includes nutrition and cooking education and improvements to the communities' options for living a healthy lifestyle. Lay Health Educators will assist in a train-the-trainer initiative to increase outreach into faith and family oriented communities.

UNC-TV (\$449,970)

The statewide public broadcasting system is embarking on a 2-year initiative called HealthWise: Healthy Living for a Lifetime to educate its viewers on a broad range of public health issues. As part of this Obesity Initiative, UNC-TV will produce and broadcast a social marketing campaign comprised of 32 Public Service Announcements (PSA) that will air 4 times daily. The Grantee will work with the Commission in creating a campaign logo and identity that will serve as an umbrella for all promotional aspects of the Commission's Obesity Initiative. Moreover, the Grantee will offer use of its PSAs to commercial TV stations across North Carolina and to PBS nationwide. Grantee will also organize training workshops for educators, daycare workers, parents and caregivers.

Wake Forest University School of Medicine (\$450,000)

The School of Medicine at Wake Forest University is partnering with the Winston Salem/Forsyth County Schools, Kernersville Family YMCA, Family Life Center, and the First Christian Church to bring their "Commit to be Fit" program to over 10,000 youths in the Kernersville community. The program will address obesity issues by increasing understanding and awareness of obesity and its health risks and by increasing opportunities for physical activity. Students who pledge to follow the CTBF program will receive discounts at participating local businesses. Those identified as obese can participate in a more specific treatment program with student-parent classes at the YMCA and counseling. Prevention strategies include integration of nutrition and physical education programs, targeting higher at-risk populations for prevention, and involving the community in the promotion of the initiative.