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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEALTH ADVOCATE APPEALS TO COACHES TO SAFEGUARD ATHLETES' HEALTH

HEY COACH! THERE'S NO TOBACCO IN BASEBALL.

(Raleigh, NC) – Spit tobacco, sometimes called smokeless tobacco, is as dangerous to the body as other tobacco products and has no place in sports especially for young people. That's the message Paul Turner, Director of the NC Spit Tobacco Program, will deliver to North Carolina's youth, high school and college sports leaders at the North Carolina Baseball Coaches Association's annual conference luncheon on Saturday, Dec. 18 at the Sheraton Capital Center Hotel in downtown Raleigh.

The NC Spit Tobacco Program, funded by the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF), seeks to reduce the rate of spit tobacco use among middle and high school students; reiterating the damaging effects of smokeless tobacco.

"We must explain to young people that spit tobacco has no place at sporting events or in their lives," said Turner, who formerly served as director of the Oral Health America's National Spit Tobacco Education Program. "Some people think smokeless tobacco is safer than using other tobacco products. That's not true. At the meeting, I will encourage coaches to educate their athletes that using spit tobacco has devastating impacts on the body."

Nicotine addiction and dependence, increased heart rate, high blood pressure, tooth loss, and ulcers are among the health risks associated with using spit tobacco. According to the Centers for Disease Control, national spit tobacco use among high school-aged boys is 10.8 percent, while North Carolina's rate is an alarming 17.6 percent.

What: North Carolina Baseball Coaches Association Conference
Meeting topic: *Smokeless Tobacco-Use Prevention and Cessation in Youth Baseball and Youth Sports in North Carolina*

When: **Saturday, Dec. 18th at 1:30 p.m.**

Where: Sheraton Capital Center Hotel at 421 S. Salisbury Street in the Oak Forest Ballroom

The lunch presentation is co-sponsored by the State Games of North Carolina/North Carolina Amateur Sports.

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.