



Contact:
Alison K. McLaurin
NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund
919-733-4009 (w); 919-649-8002(c)

L. Hester
919-882-1979 (w); 919-923-0745 (c)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DEC. 8, 2005

HWTF Honors Community Champions with 2005 *Distinguished Service Award in Preventive Health*

Sen. Bill Purcell recognized as *Legislator of the Year*

RALEIGH, NC – Proven and innovative approaches make preventive health a priority. It is this kind of commitment that has earned Sen. Bill Purcell, who represents the 25th District in Scotland County, the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund's (HWTF) inaugural *Distinguished Service Award in Preventive Health*. Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue, who serves as HWTF chair, presented Sen. Purcell with the *Legislator of the Year* award on Dec. 6 at the McKimmon Center in Raleigh.

The new *Distinguished Service in Preventive Health Awards* were created to recognize North Carolina's top community leaders who have demonstrated a tireless commitment to the health and wellness of North Carolina's residents. These recipients represent various professions including education, government, medicine, business and philanthropy. This year, 11 individuals from across the state received this high honor from Lt. Gov. Perdue and the HWTF.

"I have been impressed with the efforts of Bill Purcell," said Lt. Gov. Perdue. "Without his support, we would not have been able to get critical new childhood obesity laws passed this session."

Sen. Purcell successfully sponsored Senate Bill 961, directly based upon recommendations from HWTF's *Fit Families NC: A Study Committee for Childhood Overweight/Obesity*. This bill established improved standards for making healthy vending products available in North Carolina's public schools. It was signed into law in August.

Sen. Purcell's work for children in North Carolina spans from the examination rooms of his pediatric practice to the halls of the NC General Assembly. He has served in the NC General Assembly for nine years and is currently co-chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services and co-chair of the Senate Committee on Health Care. Sen. Purcell is the former mayor of Laurinburg, NC.

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 invests in programs and partnerships related to teen tobacco use, prescription drugs, childhood obesity and health disparities. For more information, please visit www.HealthWellNC.com.

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