

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund Announces Continued Funding of CheckMeds NC and NCRx Programs

Raleigh, NC – Recently, the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) approved continued funding for two of its prescription drug assistance programs, which provide critical services to North Carolina’s seniors. This month, the HWTF commission allocated an additional \$2 million to extend the CheckMeds NC program for another two years through June 2011. HWTF has also extended the NCRx program for another three years through December 2012.

“The CheckMeds NC and NCRx programs help North Carolina’s seniors afford medicines they need to stay healthy,” Governor Bev Perdue said. “The Health and Wellness Trust Fund again has made an investment in quality health care for North Carolina.”

CheckMeds NC offers eligible seniors one-on-one consultations with pharmacists throughout the state to ensure that they are receiving the best information and advice about their medicines. Since its launch in October 2007, CheckMeds NC has served more than 20,000 NC seniors with an estimated cost avoidance of \$10 million.

NCRx provides premium subsidy for Medicare enrollees. If a senior qualifies, NCRx will pay up to \$29 per month toward the monthly premium of a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan participating in the NCRx program. Since NCRx launched in January 2007, nearly \$1.5 million in total premiums have been paid for more than 5,000 seniors.

“Sadly, many North Carolina seniors must choose between buying everyday basics and paying for their medications,” said Vandana Shah, HWTF Executive Director. “The CheckMeds NC and NCRx programs have provided great assistance to seniors in our state. With the extension of these programs, even more seniors will benefit from these critical services.”

In order to continue to gauge the efficacy of the CheckMeds NC program, HWTF has awarded a \$25,000 grant to The Carolinas Center for Medical Excellence (CCME) to evaluate the program. CCME is a nonprofit organization that has more than two decades of experience evaluating health care programs across a variety of settings.

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 \$199 million to support preventive health initiatives and \$102 million to fund prescription drug assistance programs. For more information, please visit www.HealthWellNC.com.

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