

MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARCH 21, 2006

**HWTF CHAIR LT. GOV. BEV PERDUE TO KICK OFF
TOBACCO- FREE COLLEGES PROGRAM FOR COLLEGE-AGE YOUTH**

*More than \$1.6 million in grants awarded to reduce tobacco use among NC
18-24 year olds*

(CHAPEL HILL, NC) – Lt. Gov. Bev Perdue, chair of the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF), will kick off the state's first efforts to prevent and reduce tobacco use among college-aged North Carolinians at a training event for new grantees.

Studies show that 18-24 year olds represent the *only* age group nationally in which smoking rates are rising rather than falling. As part of its Tobacco-Free Colleges Initiative, HWTF is taking a leadership position in addressing the troubling trend of increased tobacco use among this age group.

The Trust Fund recently awarded \$1.6 million in college and community college tobacco use prevention and cessation grants. Awards were made to 20 organizations representing more than 60 colleges, community colleges and health departments around the state. Each grant recipient will encourage the adoption of smoke free policies on NC campuses and promote the new, HWTF-funded NC Tobacco Use Quitline ([1-800-QUIT-NOW](tel:1-800-QUIT-NOW)) to 18-24 year olds.

WHO: Lt. Gov. Bev Perdue, HWTF tobacco-free college grantees representing more than 60 colleges, community colleges and health departments statewide.

WHAT: HWTF Tobacco-Free Colleges Initiative Kick-Off

WHEN: Wed. March 22. **Lt. Gov. Perdue delivers keynote address at 9:30 a.m.**

WHERE: The Friday Center for Continuing Education, Dogwood Room, 100 Friday Center Drive, Chapel Hill.

According to the CDC, almost 28% of college age youth in North Carolina smoke. The 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, shows that young adults aged 18 to 25 continue to have the highest rate of current use of a tobacco product among all age groups.

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 \$127 million to support preventive health initiatives and \$78 million to fund a prescription drug assistance program. For more information, please visit www.HealthWellNC.com.

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