



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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City of Asheville to Unveil New Fit Community Sign

Lt. Gov. Bev Perdue and Mayor Terry Bellamy to promote healthy lifestyles at ceremony

ASHEVILLE, N.C. – Lt. Gov. Bev Perdue, NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) chair, will join City of Asheville Mayor Terry Bellamy and other local dignitaries to officially unveil Asheville’s new Fit Community street sign.

Fit Community is a Fit Together initiative sponsored by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC) and HWTF to combat obesity and overweight.

At an awards ceremony in Raleigh on May 10th, the City of Asheville was among eight North Carolina communities to receive a Fit Community designation, which is a special honor awarded to communities that improve health for their residents by actively promoting physical activity, healthy eating and youth tobacco use prevention.

Bellamy was among more than 150 statewide officials who attended the awards ceremony. Perdue and Bob Greczyn, BCBSNC’s CEO, presented Bellamy with a plaque and a street sign.

The following communities also received a Fit Community designation: Town of Chapel Hill, Town of Cramerton, City of Durham, City of Greensboro, City of Mount Airy, Town of Oak Island and the City of Wilmington. Pitt County received an Honorable Mention. Nearly 50 cities and towns applied to be designated as a Fit Community.

WHO: HWTF Chair Lt. Gov. Bev Perdue, Mayor Terry Bellamy, Mr. Cliff Dodson, Superintendent of Buncombe County Schools, and members of the Asheville City Council.

WHAT: Fit Community sign unveiling.

WHEN: **Tuesday, May 23, 2006**
4 p.m.

WHERE: **City County Plaza at 70 Court Plaza in Asheville, N.C.**

WHY: Obesity has emerged as a major threat to children and adults across the United States, especially here in North Carolina. According to the Centers for Disease Control, 61 percent of North Carolina adults are overweight or obese, and 25 percent reported no exercise in the prior 30 days. Fit Together’s mission is to support programs and initiatives that address this growing problem.

About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina is a leader in delivering innovative health care products, services and information to more than 3.3 million members, including approximately 691,000 served on behalf of other Blue Plans. For 72 years, the company has served its customers by offering health insurance at a competitive price and has served the people of North Carolina through support of community organizations, programs and events that promote good health. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Access BCBSNC online at www.bcbsnc.com.

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About 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 seniors. For more information, please visit www.HealthWellNC.com.

About Fit Community

Fit Together launched the Fit Community program in 2005 to reward communities for supporting healthy eating, physical activity and tobacco-free living through policy and community infrastructure. All North Carolina municipalities and counties were eligible for the Fit Community designation and nearly 50 communities applied. Applications were judged based upon objective criteria collected from peer-reviewed studies and national programs, and the selection process was managed by Active Living by Design in Chapel Hill. For more information, visit www.FitTogetherNC.org.

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