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**Fit Community Designations and Grants Promoting Healthy Lifestyles
Available to NC Towns and Counties**
Fit Together announces second phase of Fit Community

RALEIGH, NC – Today, *Fit Together*, a partnership of the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC), released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a second phase of its *Fit Community* designation and grants program.

Fit Together, the overweight/obesity prevention campaign of HWTF and BCBSNC, awarded the first phase of grants and designations in May 2006. Eight NC Communities including Durham, Chapel Hill, Greensboro and Asheville received designations. This program rewards municipalities and counties for supporting healthy eating, physical activity, and tobacco-free living through policy, promotions and community infrastructure. Although the designations are a part of the partnership, funding for the grants is provided solely by HWTF.

With escalating numbers of diseases and preventable deaths in North Carolina linked to physical inactivity, poor nutrition and tobacco use, the public health implications of being overweight have become a growing priority for HWTF. These behaviors increase the risks for cardiovascular disease, cancer, obesity, and many other serious chronic illnesses. According to a study commissioned by Be Active NC, expenses associated with obesity alone cost North Carolina \$24.1 billion annually.

"HWTF is proud that North Carolina communities are becoming part of the solution by implementing programs that make healthy lifestyles possible for all citizens. A Fit Community designation says to the public we have a cool place to live – a healthy place to work, play and go to school. We are a fit community." said Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue, HWTF chair.

All North Carolina municipalities, counties, and lead agencies that represent municipal or county partnerships and meet specified eligibility criteria outlined in the RFP are eligible to apply for the designation. Eight two-year grants of up to \$30,000 annually will be awarded to applicants that demonstrate need, proven capacity, and opportunity for positive change in addressing physical activity and/or healthy eating in North Carolina. HWTF is committed to selecting designees that represent a broad geographic range, diversity of needs, and range of strategies used to address those needs. There is no fee to apply for the *Fit Community* designation or grant. For more information about the *Fit Community* program, or to download a *Fit Community* application, visit www.healthwellnc.com.

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 3.2 million members, including approximately 620,000 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. BCBSNC is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Access BCBSNC online at www.bcbsnc.com.

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.

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