

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NOV. 17, 2005

NC Launches its First-Ever Campaign to Take On Rising Rates of Tobacco Use at Colleges

Lt. Gov. to Promote Statewide Service to Help College Students Quit

(GREENSBORO, NC) – While smoking rates among adults and teens are falling each year nationally, college age young adults are the only group for which smoking rates continue to rise. In response to the increased incidence among 18-24 year-olds, the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) is teaming up with more than 30 NC colleges and community colleges to promote North Carolina's first-ever tobacco use cessation campaign aimed at this age group. A primary focus of this new initiative will be the promotion of the newly launched state-funded quitline, 1-800-QUIT-NOW, which will provide young and adult North Carolina smokers the help they need to quit.

HWTF Chair Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue will kickoff this new college cessation campaign today, held in conjunction with the 29th annual Great American Smokeout, during NC A&T State University's Health and Wellness Fair. She also will introduce two college students who have agreed to chronicle their courageous journey on the way to quitting smoking on www.QuitlineNC.com.

For nearly 30 years, the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout has been an opportunity to join with millions of other smokers across the nation in staying tobacco-free for 24 hours with the intent of quitting for good. HWTF launched the state-funded quitline in partnership with DHHS for all North Carolinians. HWTF pays for calls from smokers under the age of 24 as well as their caregivers and teachers.

"Too many of our college students are still getting the message that it's cool to smoke," said Lt. Gov. Perdue. "I'm proud that we are using our precious resources to provide these young smokers the help they need to quit."

The HWTF's college-aimed activities include:

- A mass e-mail campaign sent to drive college students to the new state Quitline, 1-800-Quit-NOW from a recognizable figure on each college campus - including an e-mail sent from Dr. William Roper, CEO of the University of North Carolina Health Care System to all students on the UNC-CH campus. More than 115,000 college students will receive this informational e-mail .
- Promotional materials to drive awareness and use of the Quitline. Items include magnets, chip clips, pens and banners, all branded with the phone number 1-800-Quit-NOW and the Web site www.QuitlineNC.com. HWTF and its partners are distributing these items and other material more than 30 colleges, universities and community colleges promoting the initiative.
- Print ads in campus newspapers, featuring a college student holding a frozen turkey with the slogan "Quitting Cold Turkey Alone Can Be Difficult".
- The nation's first-ever formative research on how to optimally promote a Quitline to college-age young adults. Researchers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Public Health will lead the effort and HWTF will use the results to shape future campaigns.

In addition to the activities on NC campuses, more than 50 events statewide are being sponsored by HWTF teen tobacco use prevention grantees as part of this crusade. Visit www.trutookit.com for a complete listing of these events.

-MORE-

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.

ABOUT THE GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT

Every year, smokers across the nation take part in the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout by smoking less or quitting for the day on the third Thursday of November. The event challenges people to stop using tobacco and raises awareness of the many effective ways to quit for good.

¹The American Cancer Society

- ### -