

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**December 21, 2009**

**NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund Campaign Reminds Public: Bars and Restaurants Are Going Smoke Free January 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
Public is encouraged to take part in "Tasty Tuesdays"

**Raleigh, NC** – Ever wish you could enjoy that barbeque without the odor of cigarette smoke? Starting on January 2, restaurants, bars and other businesses that serve food and drink in North Carolina will be serving up smoke-free air along with their customers' orders. Today the North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) launched a media campaign to raise public awareness about the fact that this historic legislation is soon going into effect.

"Passage of the smoke-free restaurants and bars law represents an enormous step forward in protecting the public's health," said Vandana Shah, HWTF Executive Director. "The evidence of the dangers of secondhand smoke is indisputable, and North Carolina is taking the lead among tobacco-growing states with this legislation."

The HWTF television ad depicts a chef listing the January 2, 2010 "special of the day" on a chalkboard as "fresh air," with enthusiastic applause from the restaurant's patrons. The voiceover reminds the public that, as of January 2<sup>nd</sup>, all North Carolina restaurants and bars are smoke free, and ends with an encouragement to go out and enjoy the fresh air at a local restaurant.

Many communities around the state are hosting local events to celebrate the new law, which was passed by the General Assembly and signed into law by Governor Bev Perdue in May of this year. HWTF is encouraging everyone to extend the celebration beyond January 2<sup>nd</sup> by going out and enjoying their favorite restaurants now serving "fresh air."

"There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke, and we need to protect our citizens who are patronizing these public venues," said Tom Brown, HWTF Program Officer. "We are asking everyone to participate in 'Tasty Tuesdays' by going out to eat every week in January to show their support for the new law and to express their appreciation to the restaurants and bars for offering a smoke-free environment."

The U.S. Institute of Medicine recently found that smoke-free laws significantly reduce the occurrence of heart attacks. In fact, smoke-free policies can reduce the risk of heart attack by up to 47% and significantly reduce the likelihood of other heart problems.

For more information about the law or to report a violation, visit [www.smokefree.nc.gov](http://www.smokefree.nc.gov) or call the CARE-LINE at 1-800-662-7030.

**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 \$116 million to fund prescription drug assistance programs. For more information, please visit [www.HealthWellNC.com](http://www.HealthWellNC.com).*

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