

MEDIA ADVISORY

MARCH 27, 2007

**HWTF's TEEN TOBACCO USE PREVENTION GRANT PROGRAMS TO
CELEBRATE *KICK BUTTS* DAY ACROSS NORTH CAROLINA**

Charlotte Bobcats Player, NC Students Use National Day to Take a Stand Against Tobacco Use

(Raleigh, NC) — Charlotte Bobcats' Matt Carroll is no stranger to kicking butts on the basketball court. But on Wednesday, he'll help teens kick butts off the court — cigarette butts. He will join teens in Mecklenburg County, who — like teens all around the state — will be participating in local events as part of the 12th annual Kick Butts Day celebration. As in years past, NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) teen tobacco use prevention and cessation grantees will sponsor events across the state.

Kick Butts Day, an annual event sponsored by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, is a celebration of youth advocacy and a chance for youth to participate in the fight against tobacco use. This year, Kick Butts Day is raising awareness about the thousands of chemicals in each puff of cigarette smoke and the need for elected officials at all levels to step up the fight to reduce smoking and other tobacco use.

Students in Wake County will host a news conference to raise awareness about tobacco use, while oral cancer survivor Gruen von Behrens will visit a school in Alleghany County to share his personal testimony on the consequences of spit tobacco use. Other statewide activities will include: students decorating graffiti walls; youth collecting cigarette butts in six local parks over six days; and a breakfast to thank merchants who have never sold tobacco products to minors.

According to the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, more than 2,000 events are planned around the country to commemorate Kick Butts Day.

Cigarette use by North Carolina high school and middle school students has significantly declined since HWTF began funding tobacco use prevention and cessation initiatives for teens, according to an independent program evaluation by University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Cigarette use dropped 25 percent among high school students and nearly 38 percent by middle school students from 2003 to 2005, according to the evaluation report.

WHO: HWTF teen tobacco use prevention and cessation grantees all across the state

WHAT: Local events to celebrate the 12th annual Kick Butts Day

WHEN: Wed., March 28 (some events will be held all week)

REPORTERS: Visit www.trutookit.com to find an event in your area

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 \$ 143 million to support preventive health initiatives and \$102, million to fund a prescription drug assistance program of seniors. For more information, please visit www.HealthWellNC.com.