

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund Announces Availability of Grants to Extend Medication Assistance Program**

*More than 40,000 North Carolinians Have Gained Access to Free Drugs*

**(RALEIGH)** – Today, the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) announced the availability of more than \$1.6 million in grant funding over 18 months to help low-income North Carolina residents gain access to prescription drugs that many can't otherwise afford. This is the fourth phase of funding for HWTF's highly successful Medication Assistance Program (MAP) which has delivered over \$83 million worth of free medications to more than 40,000 patients across the state since its launch in 2002. This represents a 6 to 1 return on HWTF's investment in these community grants over the last five years.

Starting today, HWTF will accept applications from eligible organizations that will help low-income residents of all ages apply for free, discounted and low-cost drugs through pharmaceutical companies' prescription assistance programs. In addition, applicants may also choose to work with Medicare-eligible seniors in helping them identify their optimal federal plan, or limit their assistance to patients with certain disease states like mental health or chronic illnesses.

Currently, there are 50 organizations statewide receiving \$2 million in MAP grants which are all set to expire on December 31, 2007. The NC Institute of Medicine listed HWTF's statewide MAP program as a "significant safety net for the uninsured" in its NC Healthcare Safety Net Report 2005.

"MAP is a program that has been so spectacularly successful and recognized statewide that we are optimistic that by extending funding for another 18 months, long term support can be secured through the state," said Lt. Gov. Bev Perdue, HWTF chair. "We cannot turn our backs on the people in our state who need these medications."

Organizations are eligible to receive an HWTF grant if they fit into any of the following categories:

- *A state agency*
- *A local government or other political subdivision of the state, or a combination of such entities*
- *A nonprofit organization which has a significant purpose promoting the public's health.*

Grant proposals will be accepted from existing HWTF grantees as well as other NC organizations not currently receiving HWTF funding. Interested applicants can obtain a copy of the Request for Proposal and submit an online application by visiting HWTF's Web site at [www.HealthWellNC.com](http://www.HealthWellNC.com). **Applications will be accepted until Friday October 19, 2007 at 5:00 p.m.**

### **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 prescription drug assistance programs. For more information, please visit [www.HealthWellNC.com](http://www.HealthWellNC.com).*

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