

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**October 26, 2009**

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

*More than \$224 Million Worth of Free Medicines Have Been Provided to North Carolinians*

**(Raleigh, NC)** – Today, the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) announced the availability of more than \$3 million in grant funding over 18 months to help low-income North Carolina residents gain access to prescription drugs that many cannot otherwise afford. This is the sixth phase of funding for HWTF's highly successful Medication Assistance Program (MAP) which has delivered over \$224 million worth of free medications to more than 100,000 patients across the state since its launch in 2003. This represents an 11:1 return on HWTF's investment in these community grants over the last six 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. Applicants may also choose to work with Medicare-eligible seniors to help them identify their optimal federal plan, or may limit their assistance to patients with certain disease states like mental health or chronic illnesses.

Currently, there are 60 organizations statewide receiving over \$3.2 million in MAP grants which are set to expire in December 2009 and June 2011. The NC Institute of Medicine listed HWTF's MAP program as a "significant safety net for the uninsured" in its NC Healthcare Safety Net Report 2005.

"The MAP initiative is critical to the health of thousands of North Carolinians," said Dr. Chuck Willson, HWTF Chair. "Without MAP, many of them would not have access to the medications they need."

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 5:00 p.m. on Friday, November 13, 2009.**

### **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 \$102 million to fund prescription drug assistance programs. For more information, please visit [www.HealthWellNC.com](http://www.HealthWellNC.com).*

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