

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**HWTF's QUITLINE CAMPAIGN TO ENCOURAGE MEAC FANS TO
QUIT TOBACCO**

Campaign: Quitline booth at MEAC, radio spots featuring NFL commentator James Brown

(Raleigh, NC) — Mid-Eastern Atlantic Conference (MEAC) basketball tournament sports fans will get more than great college basketball at the event this year. When they stop by the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund's (HWTF) Quitline booth at the RBC Center, they can learn how to help themselves or a loved one become tobacco free- for good.

For the second year in a row, the HWTF is promoting its *Quitline Campaign*, which is designed to encourage 18 to 24 year-old smokers to call the Quitline to get help in quitting smoking. As part of this campaign, Quitline radio spots featuring NFL sports commentator James Brown are airing on radio stations in and around the Triangle.

This week, HWTF will be at the MEAC tournament to reinforce the Quitline message with free giveaways —wallet cards, water bottles and chip clips. Spectators can also stop by the booth to take part in the AprilAge Progression Software—a high-tech approach to graphically displaying the adverse effects of smoking as one ages.

HWTF is sharing booth space with its Teen Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation (TTUPC) grantee, Old North State Medical Society (ONSMS). HWTF began funding the TTUPC Initiative in 2003-04. ONSMS will be providing free health screenings including glucose, cholesterol and blood pressure screening.

Quitline is a component of HWTF's statewide Tobacco-Free Colleges initiative which targets college-aged youth on 60 NC campuses. HWTF awarded \$1.6 million in grants as part of the **first state-funded effort** to prevent and reduce tobacco use among this age group. A participant in the MEAC tournament, NC A&T State University is one of HWTF's Tobacco-Free Colleges grantees. Studies show that 18-24 year olds represent the only demographic in the United States in which smoking rates have increased in recent years. Nearly 28% of NC college-aged youth are smokers.

HWTF Chair Lt. Gov. Bev Perdue said the MEAC basketball tournament is the perfect venue to promote healthy lifestyles.

"We welcome the opportunity to participate in the MEAC tournament as HWTF continues to find ways to reduce the number of college students who use tobacco products," said Lt. Gov. Bev Perdue. "I am encouraging MEAC fans to stop by our booth to find out how Quitline can help young smokers kick the habit that deprives them of the chance to live a healthy life."

What: HWTF Quitline Booth at the MEAC Basketball Tournament
When: Thursday, March 8 – Saturday, March 10
Where: The main floor of the RBC Center near the West Priority entrance and section 101

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 of seniors. For more information, please visit www.HealthWellNC.com.