

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund Awards Nearly \$70,000 to
the NC Pediatric Society Foundation**
Funds Will Support Community-Based Childhood Obesity Prevention Project

RALEIGH, NC – The North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) announced the award of a \$69,600 grant to the North Carolina Pediatric Society Foundation for the Healthy, Fit and Strong Program. The grant will support a childhood obesity prevention pilot project at four community sites in Chapel Hill, Goldsboro, Raleigh and Winston-Salem. This multi-prong program will entail nutrition education for lower-income families with a Registered Dietician and physical activity provided by the YMCA three times a week for children.

“The prevalence of childhood obesity has doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the past two decades,” said Vandana Shah, HWTF Executive Director. “HWTF is continuing to combat childhood obesity by investing in pilot projects at the primary prevention level that can be easily replicated statewide.”

To be eligible for participation in this program, lower-income families must have children ages 6 -11 whose Body Mass Index is in the 85th to 97th percentile range, indicating overweight. Family membership at the YMCA will be offered for free to participating families for the duration of the 12-week program. Families attending a majority of the nutrition sessions with children who attend the physical activity sessions will earn a no-cost extension of their membership to six months. After that point, family membership can be extended for an additional six months based on the YMCA’s sliding-scale fee.

“The goal of the Healthy, Fit and Strong Program is to develop a low-cost model for family-focused, community-based childhood obesity prevention programs in North Carolina,” said Dr. Robert Schwartz, the Lead Project Investigator with Wake Forest University.” The hope is that this project will provide an economically sustainable model for expansion to other communities.”

The Healthy, Fit and Strong Program will be a pilot project starting in 2009-2010. For more information about HWTF’s obesity prevention programs, visit www.HealthWellNC.com.

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.

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