

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 14, 2008

**NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund Announces 2008
Power of Prevention Awards Winners**

HWTF Commends Winners for Work in Preventive Health Care

Raleigh, NC – The NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) honored leaders today at its second annual Power of Prevention Awards ceremony. These winners were recognized for their outstanding leadership and innovative efforts in promoting preventive health to all North Carolinians.

The award recipients were honored at a luncheon at the Carolina Club in Chapel Hill sponsored by UNC – Health Care. Dr. Jim Johnson, professor and director of Urban Investment Strategies at UNC – Chapel Hill, presented the keynote address titled: “Health Disparities in a ‘Browning’ and ‘Graying’ America: Implications and Challenges.”

“Today we are paying tribute to those who are working in our communities to promote preventive health and ensure that quality health care is available to all North Carolinians,” said Lt. Gov. Bev Perdue. “These honorees are leading the way in helping North Carolina become the healthiest state in America.”

The Power of Prevention Awards recognizes individuals across North Carolina who have taken an innovative approach in addressing preventive health, access to health care, the promotion of healthy lifestyles and addressing chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, cancer and heart disease

HWTF commissioners presented awards to individuals who have accomplished outstanding work in one of the following categories: Advocacy/Public Policy, Community Catalyst, Innovator, Leadership in Obesity, Leadership in Tobacco Use Prevention/Cessation and Leadership in Health Disparities. The following are the winners in each category:

- Advocacy/Public Policy – Gina Upchurch
- Community Catalyst – A. Ray Rogers
- Innovator – FirstCarolinaCare Insurance Company, Inc., CEO – Kenneth Lewis
- Leadership:
 - Obesity – Shellie Y. Pfohl
 - Tobacco Use Prevention/Cessation – Sally Herndon Malek
 - Health Disparities – Barbara Pullen-Smith

ABOUT THE WINNERS:

Shellie Y. Pfohl (RALEIGH) co-founded Be Active North Carolina, a nonprofit organization working statewide to increase physical activity among North Carolinians. In 2007, Be Active North Carolina was named the best physical activity organization in the country by the National Association for Health & Fitness. Pfohl is also a founding director of Be Active America, a national nonprofit organization that conducts advocacy trainings in cities and towns across the country. She was also Assistant Director of the National Association of Governor’s Councils on Physical Fitness and Sports for three years and organized the first International Conference on Physical Activity and Nutrition. Pfohl has also received the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, the highest award bestowed by the governor, for her public service to the people of North Carolina. In 2007, she was appointed to the Governor’s Task Force for Healthy Carolinians by Governor Easley.

Barbara Pullen-Smith (RALEIGH) is the executive director of the NC Office of Minority Health (OMH) and the Minority Health Advisory Council (MHAC). She has been leading these organizations since their inception in 1993. She provides leadership and develops initiatives to respond to the specific health needs of racial and ethnic minorities.

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Her work focuses on capacity building and policy, program and partnership development. She works closely with the Department of Health and Human Services, local health departments, academic institutions and other public and private agencies and organizations to address minority health and health disparity issues. Prior to her current position, she worked as a health and human services specialist for the NC General Baptist State Convention where she developed and implemented health promotion and disease prevention programs in local black churches. In 1990, Pullen-Smith was hired as the Program Coordinator for Local Services in the Division of Adult Health (now Division of Public Health).

Sally Herndon Malek (RALEIGH) has been a leader in North Carolina's efforts in tobacco prevention and control since 1991. She manages the Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch, (formerly the National Cancer Institute's Project ASSIST) with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and grant resources from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the American Legacy Foundation and the N.C. Health and Wellness Trust Fund Commission. She was named a Fellow by NC State's Natural Resources Leadership Institute in 1997 and by the Advocacy Institute Leadership Program in 1999. Malek was a co-facilitator at a weeklong course for the Centers for Disease Control's Tobacco Use Prevention Summer Institute from 1995 to 1999.

Gina Upchurch (DURHAM) is the founding director of Senior PHARMAssist, a nonprofit pharmaceutical care clinic that helps Durham seniors obtain and manage medications. In 2002 and 2006 respectively, she received the Bowl of Hygeia award for her community service work and the Don Blanton Award for her outstanding contributions to pharmacy from the NC Association of Pharmacists. In 2005, she earned the Eunice N. Tyler Award for Excellence in Public Health Education from the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Public Health, Department of Health Behavior and Health Education. Upchurch has appointments as adjunct assistant professor at the UNC School of Pharmacy, and as adjunct instructor at the UNC School of Public Health. She is a member of the NC Division of Medical Assistance Drug Utilization Review Board, the NC Medicare Partners Committee and is on the steering committee of the Advocates for a North Carolina Prescription Drug Assistance Program.

FirstCarolinaCare Insurance Company, Inc. (PINEHURST) serves 12,000 people in rural North Carolina with the goal of reducing the number of the uninsured in our community. FirstCarolinaCare was formed in 1999 by FirstHealth of the Carolinas. It was originally licensed to operate exclusively as a health maintenance organization, but received licensure to operate as a health insurer in 2007. FirstCarolinaCare primarily works with small businesses to make health coverage as accessible as possible. Its innovative group health plan, FirstPlan, offers a premium subsidy feature for lower wage workers to help them offset the amount of their contribution to their own health insurance. FirstCarolinaCare received the 2006 Honor Roll for Coverage Award from the Healthcare Leadership Council for "exemplary community programs that have distinguished themselves as leaders in providing access to health insurance for uninsured Americans."

Mr. A. Ray Rogers (GREENVILLE) has been instrumental in the start-up and sustainability of several nonprofit organizations including The Cornerstone Ministry, Inc., Wholistic Housing Ventures, Inc., L.I.F.E. of N.C. Inc. and the Cornerstone Christian Child Development Center, Inc. He serves as executive director for two of these organizations and business administrator of Cornerstone Missionary Baptist Church. Ray currently serves as a board member of the Pitt County Memorial Hospital and as the Building Committee Chairman for University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina. He also serves as Personnel Committee Chairman for the Pitt Community College Board of Trustees. As a member of the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust Advisory Board, he represents the 30-county region of Eastern North Carolina.

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.