

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 26, 2005

STUDY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS MAKE IMPACT ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY IN SCHOOLS

HWTF report highlights need for further statewide policy reform

(CHAPEL HILL, NC) – Recommendations from a report to be released on childhood obesity have not only resulted in recent historic policy changes in nutrition and physical activity for North Carolina schoolchildren, but they also provide a roadmap to address childhood obesity in the state. Sen. Bill Purcell, Rep. Verla Insko, and NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) Commissioner Dr. Olson Huff, co-chairs of HWTF's Committee on Childhood Obesity will join statewide community leaders and health advocates to discuss the findings of this new report on Thursday, October 27 at the Friday Center.

The Study Committee, *Fit Families NC*, was established by HWTF in 2003 to evaluate the status of childhood obesity in North Carolina and to recommend policy changes for addressing this growing epidemic. Some of the recommendations have already resulted in four school policy changes in physical activity, vending standards and nutrition. Two of these new policies were signed into law this year. And in April, the NC State Board of Education voted to approve a 30-minute daily physical activity requirement for students in Kindergarten through eighth grade.

The co-chairs will also announce future HWTF-funded research and pilot programs in classrooms that will help teachers find creative ways to meet this new physical activity requirement in their daily curriculum. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) was awarded a \$40,000 grant to help middle schools develop tools to implement this new requirement. A \$300,000 grant has been awarded to Wake Forest University to conduct a comprehensive pilot in select Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, the results of which will be featured in a multi-media website, to be launched in spring 2006.

More than 350 recommendations were received during the year-long study committee process. *Fit Families NC* is comprised of 19 health care experts, youth advocates, educators, and business leaders from across the state.

WHO: *Fit Families NC* Co-Chairs, Sen. Bill Purcell, Rep. Verla Insko and HWTF Commissioner Dr. Olson Huff , Health advocates and community leaders from around the state

WHAT: Release of HWTF's Study Committee's Report "Childhood Obesity in North Carolina"

WHEN: 9:00 A.M. – 10:00 A.M., Thursday, October 27, 2005

WHERE: Friday Center for Continuing Education
100 Friday Center Dr.
Chapel Hill, NC 27599

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

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