

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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North Carolina Teens Vie for Small-Screen Stardom

Contest encourages state's youth to get active in tobacco use prevention program

(RALEIGH, NC) – Appearing on TV is something many people only dream about, but for 12 North Carolina teens, that dream is about to become reality. The NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) is looking for young people ages 12-18 to star in a TV commercial encouraging teens to join the TRU (Tobacco. Reality. Unfiltered.) movement and be tobacco-free.

The TRU Teen of the Month program calls upon North Carolina teens to express — through poetry, essays, artwork, music or video — their personal accounts on the importance of being tobacco-free and how to help others be tobacco-free. Each winner will star in their own TV commercial to air regionally across the state.

The program's objective is to drive awareness of TRU, North Carolina's first state-sponsored teen tobacco-use prevention program, by showcasing teens that have adopted a tobacco-free way of life and are passionate about helping others to do the same.

"Again and again, I'm impressed by the commitment and resolve of our state's youth to curb tobacco use," said Lt. Gov. Bev Perdue, HWTF chair. "It's high time we recognize teens that are helping pave the way to North Carolina's first tobacco-free generation."

HWTF launched the program today with the release of a TV commercial and call for entries. The commercial features Raleigh teen and TRU advocate Jessica Moore. Jessica, a senior at Southeast Raleigh Magnet High School and strong supporter of the TRU movement, tells other teens how they can be a TRU star. HWTF is accepting entries now through Monday, February 25.

The Teen of the Month TV spots will air regionally in the areas served by Time Warner Cable, including the Triangle, Triad, Charlotte and Wilmington areas, beginning in April 2008. Each spot will run on News 14 Carolina and teen-oriented cable stations, such as MTV, Nickelodeon, Comedy Central.

The TRU Teen of the Month program is the latest in a series of HWTF efforts designed to help the state meet the TRU Recruitment Campaign's 5,000-strong goal announced in September 2007 at Southeast Raleigh Magnet High School. The goal is a call to action to encourage at least 5,000 NC teens to join the TRU movement by signing an online pledge to be tobacco-free.

Both the online pledge and detailed information about the Teen of the Month program — including rules, regulations and entry requirements — are available on the new and improved TRU Web site at www.realityunfiltered.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 \$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.

ABOUT TRU:

Tobacco. Reality. Unfiltered, commonly known as TRU, is North Carolina's first-ever statewide youth tobacco prevention multi-media campaign that uses testimonials of real North Carolina teens as well as hard-hitting facts to dissuade young people from using tobacco. This campaign is part of the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund's teen tobacco use prevention initiative. Funded at \$28 million from HWTF, this grassroots initiative includes the TRU media campaign, as well as a grant program including 70 grants (50 community-based grants, four statewide grants and 16 tobacco free school mini-grants) to a total of 55 organizations. To find out more about TRU, please visit www.realityunfiltered.com.

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