



State of North Carolina **Office of the Lieutenant Governor**

News Release
November 16, 2006

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Lt. Governor Perdue Announces Task Force to Study Access to Affordable Prescription Drugs and Health Insurance Coverage

RALEIGH: Lt. Governor Bev Perdue, who chairs the Health and Wellness Trust Fund Commission, announced today the formation of The Task Force for a Healthier North Carolina. The special task force will study and make recommendations about the immediate next steps to be taken on the state's healthcare policy agenda.

Since there has been little action in Washington on our major health challenges, we in North Carolina must move forward," said Lt. Governor Bev Perdue. "The work of this task force will help improve the health of our seniors, children, and working families."

The task force will specifically study and make recommendations in the following three areas:

- Assistance that the state can provide to seniors in enrolling and navigating the complexities of the federal Medicare Part D prescription drug program.
- Improving access to and enrollment in NC Health Choice, the state's public insurance for children.
- Exploring ways to improve access to and affordability of group health coverage for small businesses and their employees.

"The health of our people is very important to me and I'm honored to be serving on this task force that will find workable solutions," said task force co-chair Sen. Bill Purcell of Scotland County. "I believe the work of this group will make an immediate difference in the lives of our people."

"These are some of the critical health issues for North Carolina in the coming years," said Task Force Co-Chair Rep. Verla Insko of Orange County. "I'm proud that this task force will be on the forefront of finding solutions."

The Task Force for a Healthier North Carolina will hold a series of public forums around the state over the next year to hear testimony from experts and comments from interested groups and individuals. Today the first public forum on Medicare prescription drug coverage was held at Carolina Meadows in Chatham County. The first meeting of the Task Force for a Healthier North Carolina is tentatively scheduled for December 13th.

The Task Force for a Healthier North Carolina is commissioned by the Health and Wellness Trust Fund and will partner with the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and The Lewin Group to provide research and administrative support.