

MEDIA ADVISORY

August 30, 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**HWTF CHAIR LT. GOV. BEV PERDUE TO UNVEIL RESULTS:
SMOKING NO LONGER “RITE OF PASSAGE” FOR NC TEENS**

More Teens Never Try Cigarettes, 100% Tobacco-Free Schools Policies Big Reason Why

(GREENVILLE, NC) — Lt. Gov. Bev Perdue, NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) chair, will join Pitt County school administrators and teachers at **New Hope Middle School** on **Tues. Sept. 5 at 11 a.m.** to unveil new results about the increasing numbers of NC teens who have never smoked from the 2005 NC Youth Tobacco Survey (YTS).

Last February, Lt. Gov. Perdue announced the first round of results from the survey which showed that teen smoking rates have hit a historic low in North Carolina. The study’s data revealed that high school smoking rates have declined by one-third since 1999, and smoking rates among middle schoolers have dropped by two-thirds.

YTS, administered by the NC Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch, is the state’s definitive study that tracks tobacco use among middle school and high school students. The information collected from the survey is used to develop tobacco use prevention programs specifically targeted to young people. More than 6,000 middle and high school students from 177 schools within 79 school districts participated in the survey. The response rate was one of the highest in the nation.

WHO: HWTF Chair Lt. Gov Bev Perdue; NC State Board of Education Chair Howard Lee, Pitt County Superintendent Dr. Beverly Reep; Pitt County Board of Education Chair Michael Dixon; Hope Middle School Principal Pat Clark; Pitt County Board of Education members; health care advocates, teachers

WHAT: News conference and Q&A

WHEN: Tuesday, Sept. 5 at 11:00 a.m.

WHERE: Hope Middle School is located at 2995 Mills Road in Greenville

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 HWTF’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, 4 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.