



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Public Affairs

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N.C. Public Health Receives \$3.7 million for Obesity Prevention Efforts

RALEIGH – Improved access to fresh produce, safe places for children and adults to play, and increasing physical activity in afterschool programs will be among the top priorities for a second major federal grant to North Carolina. Gov. Bev Perdue announced the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has awarded \$3.7 million to the N.C. Division of Public Health to support obesity prevention efforts and increase physical activity through partnerships with the Appalachian District Health Department and Pitt County Health Department.

Making North Carolina a healthier state is a priority for Gov. Bev Perdue, in terms of both quality of life and from a statewide economic standpoint.

“Improving North Carolinians’ health will help them live better, longer lives,” Perdue said, “but it also reduces health care costs, increases productivity and contributes to ensuring the best workforce in the country. All of those things are terrific incentives for businesses to move to, or expand in, North Carolina.”

Pitt County will be using its grant to ramp up existing efforts in building community gardens, workplace supports for breastfeeding and a physical activity program sponsored by the Greenville-Pitt County Chamber of Commerce. Other projects included in the county-wide program will work to increase access to farmer’s markets for those who have no means of getting there to shop for produce; making healthier foods available in convenience-type stores in low-income neighborhoods and pricing those foods competitively; and increasing safe routes for kids to walk and bike to school.

The Appalachian Health District will build on existing efforts to work with child care centers to get young children moving; working with the area Farmer’s Markets to accept food stamp electronic benefits transfer (EBT); working with the Hospitality House to build a garden and offer loaner bicycles to residents; building support for school-aged youth and adults to get more physical activity; and implementing a program called “Healthy Hospitals,” where hospital cafeterias will price healthier foods more competitively.

Both Pitt County and Appalachian Health District also will be working toward increasing physical activity in after-school programs and placing signage in the community to help residents identify places to be more physically active.

“Most chronic health issues are directly related to poor eating habits and inactive lifestyles,” State Health Director Jeff Engel said. “The ARRA grants provide a much-needed boost to our prevention efforts and our goal of helping North Carolinians eat smart and move more.”

Each health department will receive \$1.35 million to implement projects in their communities. The remaining funds will be used to provide training and technical assistance to the local health departments and their community partners through the Eat Smart, Move More NC campaign. Eat Smart, Move More NC is a



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statewide movement that seeks to increase healthy eating and physical activity opportunities wherever North Carolinians live, learn, earn, play and pray. Find out more about the campaign at www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com.

North Carolina is one of nine states receiving an additional \$31 million in awards as part of the comprehensive prevention and wellness initiative, Communities Putting Prevention to Work, funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. A focus of the funding is creating sustainable changes in work and community environments to support healthy lifestyles. More than \$491.8 million was awarded to states, U.S territories and communities in February and March 2010; North Carolina received \$5.4 million.

In North Carolina, more than half of all deaths occur earlier than expected. Many of these premature deaths are related to chronic diseases that can be prevented or managed through physical activity, healthy eating, and avoiding tobacco use and exposure.

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