



September 16, 2015  
FOR RELEASE AFTER 1:00 p.m.

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**Buncombe, Cabarrus, Northampton County Health Departments Honored with  
NC GlaxoSmithKline Foundation Child Health Recognition Awards**

***- Programs Combat Obesity, Promote Immunizations and Dental Care -***

**Winston-Salem, NC** – The health departments in Buncombe, Cabarrus and Northampton counties today received Local Health Department Recognition Awards in the North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation’s 2015 Child Health Recognition Awards program. The awards highlight programs in communities and schools that combat obesity and promote immunizations and dental care.

The three departments were commended for developing innovative programs that have produced measurable, sustainable outcomes. Highlights of their programs include:

**Shield of Protection Immunization Program, Buncombe County Health and Human Services**

Hundreds of Buncombe County students are now “immunization heroes” and have their names on the Superhero Wall of Fame to prove it. Buncombe County Health and Human Services has developed an innovative campaign to tackle failing immunization rates called “The Shield of Protection.” In this campaign, staff worked hard to mobilize medical providers, childcare centers and parents to educate the community about how important it is to create a “shield of protection” to ensure better health for all. The children are energized to take pride in their immunizations by having their names put on posters, which encourages other families to do the same. Based on success with younger children, the department is moving forward with a middle school campaign to promote the meningitis vaccination, working with a group of local high school students to produce a short public service announcement that features the students as actors.

**Mobile Dental Clinic, Cabarrus Health Alliance**

Like many other counties, Cabarrus takes dental services to students with a mobile dental clinic, making it easier for students to see a dentist and for parents who otherwise have to take time off from work. The Cabarrus Health Alliance portable dental unit is unique in that it serves as a Dental Home to students. Each participating school can host the portable dental unit up to twice per year, enabling students to maintain regular oral care from the same dentist. All equipment can be easily transported into school space, so the portable unit is able to provide services at all 43 school sites instead of the 15 that previously could be served with the larger mobile unit.

**Child Health Program, Northampton County Health Department**

In Northampton County, RECESS does not mean students take a break. Instead, RECESS puts them on the move. To combat high rates of overweight/obesity, the Northampton County Health Department

Child Health Program staff used the evidence-based USDA “My Plate” and “Eat Smart, Move More” program materials, take-home exercise equipment like hula hoops and pedometers, and a monthly after-school nutrition and exercise program in partnership with several other agencies. They promoted the program through medical providers, public buildings around town and in schools. For children who attended a majority of the sessions, 36 percent reported making positive changes, and after at least seven sessions, 40 percent of the children had decreased body mass index. At the end of the school year, the program held a summer kick-off celebration to make sure students kept up their RECESS while on vacation.

### **The Awards Program**

The awards are designed to showcase exceptional and innovative programs that improve the lives of North Carolina’s children. This year’s awards focus on programs that address evidenced-based issues of particular significance to the community being served and working in partnership with others to produce sustainable, improved health outcomes for children. Key focus areas include asthma, dental health, environmental health (healthy homes), immunizations, low-birth weight, mental health, nutrition, and substance abuse including drug alcohol and tobacco.

All nominees were recognized and award recipients announced at a ceremony today in Winston-Salem during the North Carolina Public Health Association’s (NCPHA) annual meeting. The **Local Health Department Recognition Award** recognizes local health departments that have developed an innovative program that has produced measurable, sustainable outcomes.

The North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation Child Health Recognition Awards were established in 1994 to honor local health departments, public health staff and individual citizens for their dedication to improving child health. The awards include monetary grants for educational and other purposes. A Selection Committee of healthcare professionals established by NCPHA chose the award recipients.

Other recipients of the 2015 NC GlaxoSmithKline Foundation Child Health Recognition Awards are:

#### **Lifetime Achievement Recognition**

- Marian Earls, MD; Director of Pediatric Programs, Community Care of North Carolina

#### **Individual Recognition**

- Maria Clara Laury, Health Promotions Bilingual Program Coordinator, Union County Division of Public Health

#### **Public Health Staff Recognition**

- Kelly Warnock, MPH, RD, LDN; Manager, Nutrition Communications and Health Promotions Program, Durham County Department of Public Health

*The North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation supports activities that help meet the educational and health needs of today's society and future generations. The Foundation focuses on programs that emphasize the understanding and application of health, science and education at all academic and professional levels.*

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