



News Release

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Re: Public Health Foundation Tees Up for Health

(New Hanover County)— Citing the growing need to provide access to medical care for those with limited means, the New Hanover County Health Department has launched a nonprofit foundation to help bridge gaps in this community's safety net for the poor.

The Public Health Foundation of New Hanover County seeks to address public health needs that cannot be met by existing organizations. It also aims to fund innovative ideas that don't have funding sources, support collaborative efforts among agencies that improve access to care, and advocate for the highest standards of public health.

The Foundation, a private, 510c3 nonprofit agency, will pursue donations, grants, endowments and contributions from individuals, organizations, foundations or other potential donors.

"In New Hanover County, 31,000 people are uninsured and 5,000 of them are children," said Dr. Robert Weedon, Chairman of the New Hanover County Board of the New Hanover County Board of Health and President of the Foundation.

"Sixty percent of adults are overweight and more than 30 percent of our children are at risk for obesity," he said. "These statistics underscore the need for the Public Health Foundation to address access to health care and well care needs, and work to leverage the limited resources available in a smarter, more proactive way."

The Foundation's first fundraiser, the Tee Up Fore Health Charity Golf Tournament, will take place Saturday, April 18 at Wilmington Municipal Golf Course. Entry fee is \$500 per four-member team, or \$125 per individual, with the top three teams winning cash prizes. Sponsorship opportunities are also available. Jack Barto, CEO of New Hanover Regional Medical Center, and his wife Mary are co-chairs of the event.

In New Hanover County, 26,000 adults, or 21.5 percent of the non-elderly adult population, have no health insurance. Of that group, about 84 percent report they have no medical home. Among the few agencies that accept the uninsured poor, some have no appointments for new patients, and the waiting list at others is lengthy. Far too many believe the emergency room is their only option. And with the economy faltering, the situation is rapidly growing worse.

Faced with these health indicators, Health Department Director David Rice and the Board of Health developed the Public Health Foundation.

“Lack of access to health care puts a severe strain on existing resources” Dr. Weedon said. “We need to leverage the limited resources available to help all members of our community, particularly those who need our help the most.”

To contribute to the Public Health Foundation of New Hanover County, or to register for the Tee Up Fore Health Charity Golf Tournament, please call 798-6590 or visit www.phfnhc.org