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Office of Public Affairs

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**Report: North Carolinians need to eat more fruits and vegetables
*North Carolina already at work to improve healthy eating
opportunities***

RALEIGH – North Carolinians are not eating their fruits and vegetables, according to a recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But efforts are already under way in North Carolina to change that picture.

“A diet high in fruits and vegetables is important for children to grow properly, for everyone to manage their weight, and to prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and some cancers that currently contribute to poor health outcomes in North Carolina,” said Dr. Jeff Engel, State Health Director.

“The good news is that the tools in this CDC report will help North Carolina officials, business leaders, coalitions and community-based organizations better determine what is taking place in communities and schools across the state and then to identify policies that can be put in place or improved to promote healthy eating among our residents,” Engel said.

The *State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables, 2009* summarizes for the first time North Carolina’s data from multiple sources for fruit and vegetable consumption, as well as policies and environmental supports that can make it easier for North Carolina residents to eat more fruits and vegetables.

According to the report, only 25 percent of adults in the state are meeting the recommendation for fruit consumption – compared to 33 percent in the U.S. as a whole – and 30 percent are meeting the vegetable recommendation, compared to 27 percent nationally. The goal is for 75 percent of Americans to eat at least two servings of fruit daily, and for 50 percent of Americans to eat at least three servings of vegetables each day.

Among high school students, only a quarter of N.C. high school students report eating at least two fruits daily (compared to nearly a third nationally), and fewer than 10 percent say they eat at least three vegetables each day (compared to 13 percent nationally).

(MORE)



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The CDC report encourages changes in three key areas: making healthier food more available in supermarkets, grocery stores, and markets; making healthier food available in schools and increasing awareness among students through Farm-to-School and other programs; and improving food systems to get fruits and vegetables from local farms to consumers.

In August, Gov. Perdue signed into law a bill that formed the North Carolina Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council. The Council will address programs and policies to develop and sustain a local food economy. North Carolina is one of just 21 states with such a council.

North Carolina is working on statewide plans with 24 other states and the CDC to reduce obesity and other chronic diseases by helping Americans be more active and consume more healthful diets. Within North Carolina, 60 state and local agencies and organizations, including the N.C. Division of Public Health, work together in a statewide movement, Eat Smart, Move More NC, to promote increased opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity wherever people live, learn, earn, play and pray.

The *State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables, 2009* is available on the CDC Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Web site www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/. Additional information and resources are available at www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com.

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