



3070 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue Drive SE • Hickory, NC 28602 • (828) 695-5818 • [www.catawbacountyhp.org](http://www.catawbacountyhp.org)

Maria Reese, MS, Media Coordinator

Phone: 828-695-5818

June 2, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Local Substance Abuse Coalition Receives Grant to Reduce Underage Drinking**

The North Carolina Coalition Initiative (NCCI) Coordinating Center of Wake Forest University School of Medicine has awarded the Catawba County Health Partners (CCHP) Substance Abuse Coalition \$57,500 for a 14-month period to build community capacity to address substance abuse among County youth. The grant is part of a two-year, \$800,000 funding initiative from the N.C. General Assembly to support local substance abuse coalitions – a first in state history.

The NCCI is grant funded by the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services (DMHDDSAS). Direction and technical assistance is provided by the NCCI Coordinating Center. The NCCI's mission is to reduce substance abuse in communities by building the capacity of community coalitions to implement evidence-based, population-level prevention strategies.

“We are excited about this opportunity, which will help our local community deal with the serious issue of underage drinking,” said Louise Ackerman, Chairperson for the CCHP Substance Abuse Coalition. “We were honored to be selected as there were only eight grants awarded across the state.”

CCHP is a nonprofit organization that addresses health priorities based on the community's needs. In addition to substance abuse, CCHP also focuses on access to care, childhood obesity, and cancer. The Substance Abuse Coalition is a collaboration of several agencies, businesses, and interested citizens working to prevent underage drinking among youth. The Cognitive Connections will serve as the financial agent for the NCC grant.

“This is a wonderful and unique chance to build the community capacity we'll need to make meaningful long-term changes,” said CCHP Coordinator, Maria Reese. “By the end of this grant period we plan to be well on our way to implementing a comprehensive prevention strategy that will include environmental and policy changes as well as individual behavior change.”

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA), based in Washington, D.C., is a partner in this effort and will provide a total of three weeks of intensive training over the next six months to help prepare the coalition grantees for the work ahead.

For more information or to get involved with the coalition, call CCHP at 695-5800.

###