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**DURHAM'S PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN LAUNCHES DOCS FOR TOTS NC TO ENGAGE
PHYSICIANS TO BE A COMMUNITY VOICE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN**

DURHAM, NC --- Durham's Partnership for Children, a Smart Start Initiative, Wednesday, announced the launch of Docs For Tots NC, a new initiative aimed at engaging physicians and other professionals working in the local health care field, to become involved in activities to support the healthy development of young children and families through educational activities.

Durham's Partnership for Children works with community agencies and nonprofits, Durham Public Schools, the business community, local government and individuals to close the preparation gap for young children beginning at birth.

The Program will officially kick off Thursday, Oct. 25, 2007 at 6 p.m. at the Washington Duke Inn with a reception for Durham County physicians, dentists and other health professionals working with children. The keynote speaker at the event will be Dr. George Askew, the national Docs For Tots founder and first executive director.

Docs For Tots NC is a state affiliate of the National Washington, D.C.-based Docs For Tots initiative.

"Docs For Tots is vital to changing the nature of professionalism for children's doctors through increasing their civic engagement beyond clinical practice walls," said Durham's Partnership for Children Executive Director Marsha Basloe. "To continue to build upon our work to ensure that children ages birth to 5, are healthy and ready for success in school and life, The Partnership is working with the medical community to pair medical information with early care and education, family support and child development topics for families with young children."

Docs For Tots will also offer ways physicians, particularly pediatric residents, can inform parents and early childhood educators about important health topics that affect young children ages birth to five.

"This program will be an important component to community outreach for the Duke University Pediatric Residency Program," said Dr. Betty Staples, associate program director for the Duke Pediatric Residency Training Program. During 2008, the residency program will link residents to activities in the community to be a voice for addressing health care topics that affect young children and their families.

With the support of leading local physicians, Durham's Partnership for Children anticipates the program will offer more opportunities for families with young children to access preventive health care, which includes health check-ups and immunizations.

"Docs for Tots will provide, tangible, meaningful ways for physicians in the City of Medicine to support early childhood initiatives that influence the overall health of our young children," said Dr. Victor Dzau, Chancellor for Health Affairs, Duke University and President and CEO of Duke University Health System.

About Durham's Partnership for Children

Durham's Partnership for Children was founded in 1994 and first funded in 1995 to administer the Smart Start grant in Durham County. Smart Start is North Carolina's nationally recognized initiative to ensure all children enter school healthy and ready to succeed. Smart Start helps working parents pay for childcare, improves the quality of childcare and provides health and family support services in every North Carolina County. The Partnership works with funded partners (affiliated organizations) to achieve its mission: "To mobilize and unify the Durham community to create and support innovative and successful approaches to serving the needs of children 0-5 and their families." Durham's Partnership for Children also administers the Governor's More at Four Program in Durham County. *For more information about Durham's Partnership for Children, visit www.dpfc.net or call 919-403-6960, ext. 221.*

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