



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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First South Carolina Tobacco Summit to be held in Columbia

National and local speakers to present on a range of issues

COLUMBIA – The South Carolina Tobacco Collaborative (SCTC) is jointly hosting the inaugural South Carolina Tobacco Summit “*Deal or No Deal? Negotiating for Positive Public Health Policy*” on Friday, April 4 from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. at Saluda Shoals River Center in Columbia to raise awareness about tobacco use prevention and cessation.

“Our hope is this summit will be nothing short of a public health equivalent to a ‘good old fashioned revival’. This is our opportunity to celebrate the successes, revive the weary advocates, and encourage our state leaders to do all they can to keep our kids from ever starting to smoke,” said Renee’ Martin, SCTC Executive Director. “Our mission is to reduce the toll of tobacco use in South Carolina, and our advocacy efforts to change public health policy can do just that. We can prevent a new generation of smokers in our state.”

Sherri Watson Hyde, past executive director of the National African-American Tobacco Prevention Network, will deliver the summit’s keynote address. Dr. Tim McAfee, chief medical officer for Free & Clear, Inc., will headline a continuing medical education training for health care providers and public health professionals. Free & Clear provides telephone-based and Web-assisted treatment programs for tobacco cessation, including statewide service for the South Carolina Tobacco Quitline. The summit agenda is available at www.sctobaccosummit.com.

During the summit reception Thursday evening from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Comfort Suites - Harbison, local musicians featured in the 2008 calendar *Rock ‘N a Hard Place: Musicians for a Smoke Free SC* will debut ‘Her Life’, a song written for SCTC about the dangers of secondhand smoke exposure in the workplace.

“The development and production of the calendar, and now this song, is a wonderful example of collaboration between our organizations,” said Vickie Whitehead of the Musicians and Songwriters Guild of South Carolina. “The Musicians and Songwriters Guild of South Carolina is committed to advocating for local comprehensive smoke-free laws because our musicians should not have to risk their health for their livelihood.”

The **South Carolina Tobacco Collaborative (SCTC)** is a statewide assembly of the leading health organizations, community coalitions, and businesses committed to reducing the toll of tobacco use in South Carolina by providing resources and information on tobacco related issues to advocates, lawmakers, and concerned citizens. For more information, please visit www.smokefreesc.org.

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Note to reporters and editors: To arrange an on-site interview during the summit with Sherri Watson Hyde or Dr. Tim McAfee, please contact Mary-Kathryn Craft at (803) 545-4466 or craftmk@dhec.sc.gov or Adam Myrick at (803) 898-3884 or myrickar@dhec.sc.gov.