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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UNC report provides snapshot of North Carolina women's health

*Center for Women's Health Research releases
2012 North Carolina Women's Health Report Card*

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (May 17, 2012) – University of North Carolina's Center for Women's Health Research (CWHR) released their seventh-edition, 2012 North Carolina Women's Health Report Card May 17.

The document is a progress report on the health and health care needs of North Carolina's 4.9 million women. Preventive health, cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes, perinatal health, mental health and substance abuse are the key measures examined. It is the only health report of its kind in North Carolina.

Previous editions have been released biennially and tracked the state's female health statistics in two year increments. This latest edition analyzes indicators over a nine-year time period which allows for the inclusion of a trends analysis.

"The addition of a trend analysis to the report card allows policymakers, healthcare providers, and other agencies to see clearly how North Carolinian women's health has changed over time," said Dr. Wendy Brewster, Director of CWHR. "This report card provides specific information that is useful to stakeholders in taking appropriate action to improve the health of women in our state."

Grades within the report also help summarize CWHR's findings. Highlights of the 2012 North Carolina Women's Health Report Card include:

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Positive findings:

- North Carolina women exceeded many Healthy People 2010 preventative health objectives.
- 80 percent of women over 50 have had a mammogram in the past two years and 64 percent have had a colonoscopy.
- Overall, 68 percent have been to the dentist in the past 12 months.
- Smoking among women in North Carolina has decreased over the last decade.

Adverse findings:

- Rates of chronic disease are increasing among women in North Carolina. In 2009, more than one in four North Carolina women were obese and one in 10 had diabetes.
- Birth outcomes in North Carolina are poor with 9.1 percent of babies in 2009 of low birth weight, nearly double the Healthy People 2010 goal of five percent or less.
- Less than half of new mothers are still breast-feeding at three months and the percentage of women going without first trimester prenatal care is increasing.
- Native American and African American women carry a higher burden of disease than Caucasian women. They are nearly two times more likely than Caucasian woman to have diabetes.
- African American women are 14 times more likely than Caucasian women to contract HIV.

The report card is distributed to medical and public health professionals, policy makers, researchers and women's health advocacy groups throughout the state. Data was compiled from state health behavior surveys, vital statistics, disease reporting systems, and US Bureau of Labor Statistics and Census Bureau reports.

The mission of CWHR is to improve women's health through research by focusing on diseases, disorders and conditions that affect women only, women predominately, and/or women differently than men. Research efforts that require the most attention are identified through the collection and analysis of data for the report card. Current areas of research targeted by the Center include perinatal health, cancers affecting women, obesity, diabetes, women's cardiovascular health, women's mental health and substance abuse.

A full copy the 2012 North Carolina Women's Health Report Card may be downloaded at <http://cwahr.unc.edu>.

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