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FOR RELEASE AFTER 1:30 p.m.

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**Cabarrus Health Alliance Program Manager Lauded with  
NC GlaxoSmithKline Foundation Child Health Recognition Award**

***- Debbie Biggerstaff Reaches Youth through Innovative Approaches Program -***

**Asheville, NC** – Debbie Biggerstaff is called “the quiet wonder woman” by her colleagues in Cabarrus County. She encompasses the qualities every health department wants and needs: she is loyal, hardworking and passionate about changing the lives of youth. Her leadership of the Innovative Approaches program has given a voice to families with children with special health care needs and has brought needed community partners to the table to listen. It also has earned her the Public Health Staff Recognition Award in the North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation’s 2017 Child Health Recognition Awards program.

Among her many accomplishments, Biggerstaff developed the annual Family Resource CAFÉ conference to educate families about resources, services and navigation; led the Mental Health Navigator training; provided education to families and Emergency First Responders regarding the tools and resources needed for families with children with special health care needs, and developed the Latino Parent Advisory Council. Because she is so well respected in her field, she was asked to write guidelines for other Innovative Approaches Projects for replication across the state.

**The Awards Program**

The awards are designed to showcase exceptional and innovative programs that improve the lives of North Carolina’s children. This year’s awards focus on programs that address evidenced-based issues of particular significance to the community being served and work in partnership with others to help improve health outcomes for children. Key focus areas include asthma, dental health, environmental health (healthy homes), immunizations, low birth weight, mental health, nutrition and substance abuse, including drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

All nominees were recognized and award recipients announced at a ceremony today in Asheville during the North Carolina Public Health Association’s (NCPHA) annual fall meeting. The **Public Health Staff Recognition Award** is given to full- or part-time employees or retirees of a local health department in recognition of their outstanding service in preventive health activities in their local community.

The North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation Child Health Recognition Awards were established in 1994 to honor local health departments, public health staff and individual citizens for their dedication to improving child health. The awards include monetary grants for educational and other purposes. A Selection Committee of healthcare professionals established by NCPHA chose the award recipients.

Other recipients of the 2017 NC GSK Foundation Child Health Recognition Awards are:

**Lifetime Achievement Recognition**

- Elizabeth Krzysztoforska, DDS; Dental Director, Alamance County Children Dental Clinic

**Individual Achievement Recognition**

- Sarcanda Green, RN; MESH Coordinator, Wilkes County Health Department

**Local Health Department Recognition**

- Gaston County Department of Health & Human Services, Substance Treatment And Rehabilitation Program (STAR)
- Guilford County Department of Health & Human Services, JustTEENS
- Madison County Health Department, Madison Substance Awareness Coalition

*The North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation supports activities that help meet the educational and health needs of today's society and future generations. The Foundation focuses on programs that emphasize the understanding and application of health, science and education at all academic and professional levels.*

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