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U.S. Congressman Coble Reads Aloud to Young Children in Burlington in Support of Reach Out and Read School Readiness Program

(Burlington, NC – April 26, 2011) Doctors and nurses at Burlington Pediatrics are sending families home from checkups with free books and a very important prescription – “read aloud to your children.” Today, U.S. Congressman Howard Coble (NC-06) visited the clinic, not only to cheer them on, but to practice what doctors preach by reading to a group of young patients.

Burlington Pediatrics participates in Reach Out and Read, a program that prepares America’s youngest children to succeed in school by partnering with doctors to prescribe books and encourage families to read together. Reach Out and Read’s medical providers advise parents about the importance of reading aloud and give free books to children at checkups from 6 months through 5 years.

Burlington Pediatrics is able to provide Reach Out and Read due to funding support from Alamance Partnership for Children, which is the local Smart Start agency in Alamance County. The Partnership’s mission is to ensure that all Alamance County children arrive at kindergarten happy, healthy, and ready to learn. Because pre-literacy is a key component of this mission, the Partnership fully funds the Reach Out and Read program for Burlington Pediatrics.

The books are new, carefully chosen, and developmentally-appropriate. Through Reach Out and Read, each child starts kindergarten with a home library of up to 10 books and a parent who has heard at every health supervision visit about the importance of books and reading.

“Childhood development experts tell us that the most important thing that parents can do to prepare their children to succeed in school is to read aloud to them every day,” said Reach Out and Read’s Chief Executive Officer, Earl Martin Phalen. “Reading helps expose kids to new words and new worlds, and it helps bring families closer together. On behalf of all the doctors and nurses who participate in Reach Out and Read, I want to thank Congressman Coble for his strong support of early literacy and of our program nationwide.”

Burlington Pediatrics is one of eight Reach Out and Read Programs in Congressman Coble’s District, which together serve nearly 12,500 children. Statewide, Reach Out and Read serves children at 89 locations, reaching nearly 100,000 infants, toddlers and preschoolers each year.

“I commend the doctors, nurses, and staff at Burlington Pediatrics for their outstanding advocacy on behalf of children’s literacy,” said Congressman Coble. “Reading to young children is a vital component of early childhood development and contributes greatly to a child’s ability to arrive at school ready to read and achieve. Reach Out and Read distributes hundreds of thousands of books to North Carolina children each year, and I am proud to support this critical program.”

Reach Out and Read doctors and nurses distribute 6.4 million books to nearly 4 million children and their families annually at 4,654 pediatric practices, hospitals, clinics, and health centers in all 50 states, targeting those centers which serve children at socioeconomic risk.

Reach Out and Read has one of the strongest records of research support of any primary care intervention. The research proves that families served by Reach Out and Read read together more often, and their children enter kindergarten with larger vocabularies, stronger language skills, and a six-month developmental edge. More than 27,000 medical providers nationwide currently participate in Reach Out and Read.

For more on Reach Out and Read, visit www.reachoutandread.org.

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