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Clean Air Carolina Celebrates Clean Construction Partnership with Novant Health and Carolinas HealthCare System

Charlotte, NC – Clean Air Carolina, a statewide clean air advocacy group, has partnered with Novant Health and Carolinas HealthCare System to implement clean construction practices at their future facilities.

The two medical systems joined together to improve air quality on their construction sites by requiring the use of low-emission equipment and discouraging unnecessary idling. These measures will help protect the health of patients, hospital visitors, staff, construction workers, and neighbors.

In 2016 Clean Air Carolina worked with Novant Health on a study to demonstrate the impact hospital construction projects can have on air quality during the construction of Novant's Women's Center in Matthews, NC. The study estimated that the use of newer equipment with diesel particulate filters along with anti-idling signage reduced particle pollution by 33%.

Diesel exhaust is highly toxic and considered to be carcinogenic. Between 2008 and 2014 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) phased in rules requiring off-road equipment to have particulate filters which reduced particle pollution by almost 96% compared to pre-2000 engine models.

"This is a major clean air win for public health," June Blotnick, Executive Director of Clean Air Carolina, said. "We are hoping other hospital systems in North Carolina will follow suit and take steps to reduce diesel emissions on their construction sites."

Dr. Thomas Zweng, Executive Vice President and Chief Medical Officer for Novant Health, noted that the decision to reduce emissions on their campuses is in line with Novant's mission. "We exist to improve the health of the communities one person at a time, and foundational to that is that we all have clean

water and clean air," said Zweng. "So it's a natural alliance, a natural partnership to work with others in the community that are focused on clean air."

Carolinas HealthCare System worked with Novant to create the new facilities standard. Director of Environmental Sustainability Solutions for Carolinas HealthCare System, Kady Cowan, said construction happens on medical campuses more often than you might imagine.

"We are constantly renovating and expanding and changing our facilities." Cowan said. "The idea is to really start to look towards market transformation and making sure that the most clean-burning equipment is the equipment that is the most widely used and available across Charlotte."

The commitment to prioritize clean construction practices by Novant Health and Carolinas HealthCare System serves as a model for other health-based construction projects in North Carolina and the Southeast. According to the EPA, every dollar spent on reducing diesel pollution results in \$13 in public health benefits.

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Clean Air Carolina is a nonprofit organization based in Charlotte, NC with a satellite office in the Triangle. Our mission is to ensure cleaner air quality for all North Carolinians through education and advocacy and by working with our partners to reduce sources of pollution.