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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 24, 2007

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**The Duval County Health Department and Partners Press Conference
Announce Plans for the 2007 Boys2Men Health Symposium and Basketball Game**
"Breaking the Silence...Bridge the Gaps"

Jacksonville, FL – The Duval County Health Department, in partnership with the Honorable Glorious Johnson, The Bridge of Northeast Florida, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and Baptist Health, will hold a press conference to announce plans for the 2007 Boys2Men Health Symposium and Celebrity Basketball Challenge. The press conference will be held Thursday, April 26, 2007 at The Bridge of Northeast Florida, during which time male youth who attend The Bridge's after school program will paint a mural depicting this year's Boys2Men theme: **Breaking the Silence...Bridging the Gaps.**

Community leaders are committed to helping improve the state of boys and men our community and will speak to this end during the press conference: they are Dr. Jarik Conrad, Blueprint for Prosperity; Officer Ken Jefferson, Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and Dr. Robert Harmon, Duval County Health Department.

Boys2Men is a community centered initiative created to improve outcomes for young males by addressing barriers that impede teen males as they transition into manhood and that directly impact a young man's potential of becoming a productive, thriving adult. Boys2Men is also designed to increase the awareness of cultural, social and environmental issues that affect the health status of urban males.

Glorious Johnson says, "Jacksonville's statistics demand our collaborative attention:" Death rates for adolescents (ages 10-19) in Duval County are higher than the state and national rates. In Jacksonville, the leading cause of death for young males age 15-24 is homicide followed by unintentional injuries – both of which are directly related to how boys are socialized. "If we are going to improve the state of Jacksonville's men, it is imperative that we start with educating and empowering the boys in our community," Johnson continued.

Again this year, the Boys2Men two-day event will galvanize boys and men for fun, learning and empowerment. The event will be held Friday, June 15 and Saturday, June 16 at the Jacksonville Downtown Public Library for the Health Symposium from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Edward Waters College Gymnasium for the basketball tournament at noon, respectively. The 2007 event is shaping up to be just as successful as last year's event, when over two hundred attendees participated. Community leaders like Vinnie Johnson, Vice President Shands Administration, Councilman Reggie Fullwood and Ken Pennix, President of 100 Black Man of Jacksonville participated last year. This year Betty Burney and Nat Glover are the honorary team coaches.

For more information, contact Anthony Grissett, Healthy Jacksonville: Healthy Men at 665-2276

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