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**State Auditor Issues Subpoena to Operation Sickle Cell  
for Documents and Information Related to State Spending**

RALEIGH, NC – June 8, 2007

Today, the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) issued a subpoena to Operation Sickle Cell in Fayetteville, NC for documents and information related to an examination of the spending of State grants. While conducting an on-site visit on June 6, 2007, the OSA was denied statutorily required "ready access" to pertinent records and information. OSA is represented by the Attorney General's office and is working with the Cumberland County Sherriff's Department in the service of the subpoena. The Department of Heath and Human Services, the granting agency, is being kept apprised of all developments.

"State law clearly gives the OSA 'ready access' to all personnel and documents relating to the spending of State funds. As State Auditor, I must be committed to take all necessary steps to ensure transparency and accountability in State spending," said State Auditor Leslie Merritt.

The OSA annually performs hundreds of audits and reviews of State agencies, universities, community colleges and non-profit State grant recipients and this is the first time in a decade that the State Auditor's office has been forced to use its lawful subpoena power. The OSA only uses its subpoena power as a last resort after every avenue and opportunity for compliance has been exhausted.

"I appreciate any good work that Operation Sickle is doing in Fayetteville and Cumberland County, but any organization that takes State money also submits to openness and transparency in the way that money is being spent," said State Auditor Leslie Merritt.

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