

## APPENDIX K: Cover letters in English

Note: All the letters in this appendix reflect the All-Adult respondent selection method. For the study, that one line in the letter (in bold here) will be edited to make it appropriate for whatever respondent selection method has been assigned. Otherwise, the letters will be identical.

### **Advance Letter and FAQs (sent prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> mailing of the questionnaire)**

(ON HHS LETTERHEAD)

Dear Sir or Madame:

We are writing to invite you to participate in an important national survey sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Health Information National Trends Survey (HINTS). The goal of HINTS is to learn what health information people want to know and where they try to find it.

The HINTS survey is conducted every few years. In previous HINTS surveys we learned:

- About 80% of adults are not sure which recommendations about nutrition to follow;
- Nearly 50% of adults don't know the age at which to begin screening for certain types of cancer;
- Americans are *less trustful* of the health information they obtain from online sources.

By completing this questionnaire, you will help us learn what health information you and your family need and how to make it available to you.

**In a few days, you will receive a package with two questionnaires and \$2 as a token of our appreciation for your participation.** We ask that each adult in your household complete a questionnaire and return it to us in the postage-paid envelope.

Your participation is voluntary and your responses will not be linked to your name.

You can find out more about the study on the other side of this letter, or by going to the study website at [HINTS.cancer.gov](http://HINTS.cancer.gov). We have contracted with Westat, a research firm, to conduct the survey. If you have any questions about HINTS or you need more questionnaires, please call Westat toll-free at 1-888-XXX-XXXX.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Bradford W. Hesse, Ph.D.  
HINTS Project Officer  
National Institutes of Health  
U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services

***Si prefiera recibir la encuesta en Español, por favor llame 1-888-XXX-XXXX.***  
The Health Information National Trends Survey is authorized under 42 USC, Section 2



**Some Frequently Asked Questions  
about the  
Health Information National Trends Survey**

**Q: What is the study about? What kind of questions do you ask?**

A: The study concerns health and how people receive health information. For example, we will ask how you usually get information about how to stay healthy, the sources of information you most trust, and how you might like to get such information in the future. We will also ask about your beliefs on what contributes to good health, how best to prevent cancer, your participation in various health-related activities, and related topics.

**Q: How will the study results be used? What will be done with my information?**

A: Findings will help the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services promote good health and prevent disease by determining ways of better communicating accurate health information to Americans.

**Q: How did you get my address?**

A: Your address was randomly selected from among all of the known home addresses in the nation. It was selected using scientific sampling methods.

**Q: Why should I take part in this study? Do I have to do this?**

A: Your participation is voluntary, and you may refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time. However, your answers are very important to the success of this study and will represent thousands of others. Getting an answer from all the households chosen for the study is the best way to make sure the study results reflect the thoughts and opinions of all Americans.

**Q: Will my answers to the survey be kept private?**

A: Yes. Your answers will be kept private under the Privacy Act. Your answers cannot be connected to your name or any other information that could identify you or your household, to the extent provided by law. The completed questionnaires will be stored in a separate file with restricted access. Both the paper and electronic versions of the information will be destroyed shortly after the research is finalized.

**Q: How long will it take to answer the questions?**

A: About 20 to 30 minutes.

**Q: Who is sponsoring the study? Is this study approved by the Federal Government?**

A: The study is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The study has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the office that reviews all federally-sponsored surveys. The OMB approval number assigned to this study is 0925-0538.

**Q: Who is Westat?**

A: Westat is a research company located in Rockville, Maryland. Westat is conducting this survey under contract to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

**Invitation Letter and FAQs (sent with 1<sup>st</sup> mailing of questionnaire)**

(ON HHS LETTERHEAD)

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HINTS Project Officer  
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The Health Information National Trends Survey is authorized under 42 USC, Section 285



## **Some Frequently Asked Questions about the Health Information National Trends Survey**

**Q: What is the study about? What kind of questions do you ask?**

A: The study concerns health and how people receive health information. For example, we will ask how you usually get information about how to stay healthy, the sources of information you most trust, and how you might like to get such information in the future. We will also ask about your beliefs on what contributes to good health, how best to prevent cancer, your participation in various health-related activities, and related topics.

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**Follow-up letter and FAQs (sent with additional mailings of survey)**

(ON HHS LETTERHEAD)

Dear Sir or Madame:

We recently wrote to invite you to participate in an important national survey sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The goal of the Health Information National Trends Surveys (HINTS) is to learn what health information people want to know and where they go to find it. Your responses will help keep Americans better informed on the health issues important to them.

HHS needs your help! We are writing to let you know that we have not yet received your completed questionnaire. To make sure HINTS provides accurate information, we need all the households invited to participate in this year's HINTS to complete the survey. If you did send back your survey and it crossed in the mail with this letter, thank you for the time you took to help make this study a success. In the event that your questionnaires were misplaced, additional copies are enclosed.

**We ask that each adult in this household complete a questionnaire and return it to us in the postage-paid envelope within the next two weeks.**

If you have any questions or would like to request additional copies of the survey, please call Westat toll free at 1-888-XXX-XXXX.

Thank you in advance for contributing to this important national study.

Sincerely,



Bradford W. Hesse, Ph.D.  
HINTS Project Officer  
National Institutes of Health  
U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services

To learn more about this  
study, go to:  
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A: Westat is a research company located in Rockville, Maryland. Westat is conducting this survey under contract to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

**Reminder Postcard**

A few days ago you should have received a questionnaire packet asking for your household's participation in the Health Information National Trends Survey. By completing the questionnaire, you can help the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services determine the best ways of communicating important health information to all Americans.

**We have invited each adult in the household complete a questionnaire.** If you have already returned the questionnaire(s) to us, please accept my sincere thanks. If any adult here has not yet completed and returned a questionnaire, please do so as soon as possible.

Your participation is important to the study's success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bradford W. Hesse". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'B'.

Bradford W. Hesse, Ph.D.  
HINTS Project Officer  
National Institutes of Health  
U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services

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