

NYTS STATE LETTER OF INVITATION

{DATE}

{FIELD}1

Dear {FIELD}2 :

I am writing to inform you that XX schools in your State are among the 200 schools randomly selected across the United States to participate in the 2012 National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS) sponsored by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). As witnessed over the past few decades, youth tobacco use can increase or decrease rapidly. More recently from 2003 to 2009, the CDC reported that while youth smoking has declined it has occurred at slower rates. Conduct of the NYTS has increased our ability to detect rapid changes in tobacco use behaviors and their influences, thereby enabling states, school districts, schools, and community organizations to modify their tobacco prevention and control interventions, if circumstances require

First conducted in 1999, the NYTS is an ongoing survey of students in grades 6 through 12 that gathers information on: (1) prevalence of use (cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, cigars, and tobacco in a pipe, bidis, and kreteks), (2) knowledge and attitudes, (3) media and advertising, (4) minors access and enforcement, (5) school curriculum, (6) environmental tobacco smoke exposure, and (7) cessation. The NYTS was designed in cooperation with Federal agencies and numerous state and local departments of education and health and is conducted biennially in odd-numbered years. Each cycle has produced valuable data regarding students' knowledge of and attitudes toward tobacco; their exposure to environmental tobacco smoke; and their exposure to influences that promote or discourage tobacco use.

The CDC respects the educational mission of schools. For that reason, only a small number of classes in each school, one or two at each selected grade-level, are chosen randomly to participate. Data collection will occur during February through April 2012. Questionnaires will be administered during one normal class period by specially trained field staff. Survey administration procedures are designed to protect student privacy and allow for anonymous participation. Counties, cities, school districts, schools, and students will not be identified in any published reports.

As a symbol of appreciation for contributing their time and support, the CDC will provide each participating school with a monetary incentive. One option is to use these funds for prevention curriculum and educational materials. However, no restrictions will be placed on how schools may use these funds.

Your support for these surveys will help ensure the voluntary participation of the schools selected in your State. The NYTS is the most comprehensive, nationally representative source of tobacco-related behaviors and the *only* source of such data for middle school students (grades 6-8). In parallel to this national survey, state level YTS questionnaire is used independently by many state and local departments of education and health to conduct their own surveys. Results from the national survey serve as an index against which state- and local-level data can be compared and are used by states to support the design, implementation, and evaluation of effective tobacco use prevention and control programs.

Enclosed are a list of schools selected in your state, the 2012 NYTS questionnaire, fact sheet, and parental permission forms. Within one week, a representative from ICF Macro, Inc., a nationally recognized survey research firm contracted by CDC to conduct the NYTS, will contact you. If you have any immediate questions, please call Ms. Kate Flint of ICF Macro, Inc., at (800) 675-9727 or Mr. René Arrazola of CDC at (770) 488-2414. Your support for this survey will help assess and improve efforts to reduce priority health-risk behaviors among adolescents throughout our Nation.

Sincerely yours,

Timothy McAfee, MD, MPH
Director of the Office on Smoking and Health

Enclosures