

NYTS PILOT STATE LETTER OF INVITATION

{Date}

{Contact Name}

{Address}

{City}, {State} {Zip Code}

Dear {Contact Name}:

I am writing to inform you that {#} schools in your State are among the approximately sixty schools randomly selected across the United States to participate in the 2017 National Youth Tobacco Survey Pilot Study (NYTS Pilot) sponsored by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The pilot study will be conducted in parallel to the National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS), and will examine the feasibility of transitioning from a paper-and-pencil questionnaire to a tablet-based administration. Transitioning to a computer based survey may reduce respondent burden in the future.

As witnessed over the past few decades, youth tobacco use can increase or decrease rapidly, especially with the introduction of new tobacco products that appeal to youth. The CDC reported that from 2001 to 2015, cigarette smoking declined among middle and high school students while the use of electronic cigarettes and hookahs increased among the same population. Efforts such as the NYTS have increased our ability to measure changes in tobacco use behaviors and their influences, thereby enabling states, school districts, schools, and community organizations to adapt their tobacco prevention and control programs to combat the most prevailing issues at hand.

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 other tobacco products), (2) knowledge and attitudes, (3) media and advertising, (4) minors' access and enforcement, (5) school curriculum, (6) secondhand smoke exposure, and (7) cessation. The NYTS was designed in cooperation with Federal agencies and numerous state and local departments of education and health. Each cycle has produced valuable data regarding students' knowledge of and attitudes toward tobacco; their exposure to secondhand 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 May 2017. Questionnaires, administered via computer tablets, will be administered during one normal class period by specially trained field staff. Computer tablets will be provided for use during the survey administration. Survey administration procedures are designed to protect student privacy and allow for anonymous participation. States, 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 award. One option is to use these funds for prevention curriculum and educational materials. However, no restrictions will be placed on how schools can use these funds.

Your support for this survey will help ensure the voluntary participation of the schools selected in your district. The NYTS is the most comprehensive, nationally representative source of data regarding tobacco-related behaviors and the only source of such data for middle school students (grades 6-8). In parallel to this national survey, the NYTS 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 is a list of schools selected in your state, sample parental permission forms, and a survey fact sheet. Within one week, a representative from ICF International, a nationally recognized survey research firm, will contact you. If you have any immediate questions, please call Jill Trott of ICF International at (800) 919-8980. Your support for this survey, which will help assess and improve efforts to reduce tobacco use among adolescents throughout our Nation, is appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Linda Neff
Branch Chief
Office on Smoking and Health
National Centers for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Enclosures

cc: