

Youth Tobacco Survey Policy Memorandum 2005-01

Coordination of State Youth Tobacco Surveys and Youth Risk Behavior Surveys

State health and education departments commonly use both Youth Tobacco Surveys (YTS) and Youth Risk Behavior Surveys (YRBS) to obtain meaningful health-related data. Because schools are asked to conduct many other surveys as well, data quality, organizational relationships, and efficiency can suffer when schools are asked to participate in both the YTS and the YRBS. While these problems can occur even when the YTS and the YRBS are conducted in alternate years, they can be even more serious when the surveys are conducted during the same school year. This memorandum identifies Office on Smoking and Health (OSH) policies and recommendations for coordinating the YTS with the YRBS so that the survey burden on individual schools is minimized and each survey's opportunity for success is enhanced.

1. States should conduct the YTS during the fall of odd-numbered years or the spring of even-numbered years, preferably the latter. The YRBS Handbook specifies that the YRBS should be conducted during the spring of odd-numbered years.
2. Even when the YTS and the YRBS are scheduled to be conducted during different school years, states may choose to coordinate sample selection, so that over a two-year cycle a school is asked to participate in only one of the surveys.
3. States should make every effort to conduct the YTS and the YRBS during different school years. If it is nevertheless necessary to conduct the YTS and the YRBS during the same school year, OSH will--except in rare cases--provide technical assistance for the YTS only if the state Tobacco Control Program is able to coordinate sample selection with the YRBS. In order for a state to receive OSH technical assistance to conduct a YTS survey that does not allow coordination during a YRBS school year, the state must show that *not* using the desired sample design or *not* conducting the YTS at that time would result in significant negative consequences for that state's Tobacco Control Program
4. For coordination of sample selection to occur, the sample designs of the two surveys must be compatible with each other. Sample designs may be created to provide statewide estimates only or both statewide and subpopulation estimates. Subpopulations may be defined as geographic regions or by specific demographic characteristics. Estimates for subpopulations usually require oversampling; in the few cases where subpopulation estimates do not require oversampling, the sample design is the same as for statewide estimates. YTS sample designs often are created to provide both statewide and subpopulation estimates. YRBS sample designs almost always are created to provide statewide estimates only. Nevertheless, in order to accommodate all logical possibilities, the situations that allow or do not allow coordination

are stated in this memorandum in general terms. The following sample design situations allow the surveys to be coordinated:

- a. The goal of both surveys is *statewide estimates only*.
 - b. The goal of one survey is statewide estimates only and that of the other survey is statewide and regional—for example, district or county—estimates *for every region within the state*.
 - c. The goal of both surveys is statewide and regional estimates *for every region within the state*.
 - d. The goal of both surveys is statewide estimates and regional estimates *in the same specific regions*.
 - e. The goal of one survey is statewide estimates and regional estimates for specific regions within the state and that of the other survey is regional estimates only *but in the same specific regions*.
 - f. The goal of both surveys is regional estimates only. Coordination will work in this situation *regardless* of whether the two surveys are interested in the same specific regions or different regions. (If they are not interested in same regions then coordination is not needed.)
 - g. In all of the above scenarios, both surveys must also agree either to do *no oversampling* of specific demographic subgroups or to *oversample for the same demographic subgroups*.
5. The following sample design situations do not allow coordination:
- a. The goal of one survey is statewide estimates only and the goal of the other is only regional estimates for *specific regions within the state*.
 - b. The goal of both surveys is statewide estimates and regional estimates in specific regions *but those regions differ from each other*. (The surveys can still coordinate sample selection on the statewide level, but not on a regional level.)
 - c. The goal of one survey is to oversample specific demographic subgroups and the goal of the other *does not include oversampling for specific demographic subgroups*.
 - d. The goal of both surveys is to oversample specific demographic subgroups *but those subgroups differ from each other*.