

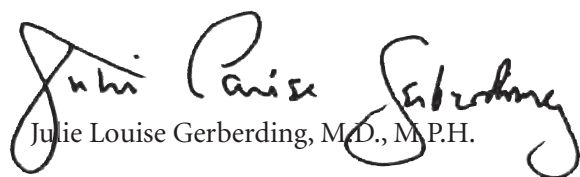
## A Message from the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

We are pleased to present this updated edition of *The Tobacco-Free Sports Playbook* and hope the tools and examples will be helpful as you reach out to our nation's young people. These materials can be downloaded at [www.cdc.gov/tobacco/youth/educational\\_materials/sports/00\\_pdfs/CDC\\_Sports\\_Playbook.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/youth/educational_materials/sports/00_pdfs/CDC_Sports_Playbook.pdf) and you can customize them to meet your specific needs. We encourage your participation in this initiative to promote sports programs through health departments, community organizations, schools, and teams as a healthy and positive alternative to tobacco use.

Since the first edition of *The Tobacco-Free Sports Playbook* was released in 2001, participation in youth sports in the United States has remained strong. Sports activities are still a great way to reach our nation's young people with information about how to make important health decisions related to tobacco use, physical activity, and nutrition. Because health behaviors are usually established in childhood, positive choices must be promoted and reinforced before damaging behaviors start or become habits.

Every day in the United States, around 3,900 youths aged 12 to 17 try their first cigarette.<sup>1</sup> If current patterns continue, an estimated 6.4 million of today's children can be expected to die prematurely during adulthood from a smoking-related disease, including heart disease; multiple cancers, including those of the lung, mouth, bladder, pharynx, and esophagus; stroke; and chronic lung disease.<sup>2</sup> Nationwide, 8 percent of middle and high school students report being current users of smokeless tobacco.<sup>3</sup> Smokeless tobacco use by adolescents is associated with health problems ranging from gum disease to oral cancer.<sup>2</sup>

By working together, we can get young people involved in positive activities like sports, and help them avoid engaging in risky behaviors.



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