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Kathleen A. Ethier, PhD  
Director, Division of Adolescent and School Health  
National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD and TB Prevention  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road, NE, MS-E75  
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Dr. Ethier:

The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) is pleased to provide this letter of support for the 2019 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), which will gather nationally representative data for students in grades 9 through 12 on priority health risk behaviors. The information generated from the 2019 YRBS is essential for measuring the effectiveness of prevention and education programs, ensuring accountability, and providing an index against which States may compare their own local YRBS results.

To reduce the burden in any one school, only a small number of classes (one or two per grade) will be selected randomly within each selected school from required courses. The survey will take one regular 45-minute class period to complete and will be administered by specially trained field staff.

ASTHO's mission is to support, equip, and advocate for state and territorial health officials in their work of advancing the public's health and well-being. The YRBS is an integral tool for collecting information about the health behaviors of high school youth, including risk taking and risk avoidance. These behaviors contribute to the leading causes of mortality and morbidity during both youth and adulthood and include: behaviors that result in unintentional injuries and violence; tobacco use; alcohol and other drug use; sexual behaviors that contribute to HIV infection, other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and unintended pregnancies; unhealthy dietary behaviors; and physical inactivity. This information is critical for program planning and policy development at the state, local, and national levels.

ASTHO understands that the rights and anonymity of all students are protected and that data will not be reported by school, district, or state, but rather it will be presented as representative data of the nation as a whole. Therefore, we encourage and recommend that States, school districts, and schools participate voluntarily in this important activity.

Sincerely,



Michael Fraser, PhD, MS, CAE, FCPP  
Executive Director, ASTHO