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From: Patrick Cork, Administrator

## National Survey on Drug Use and Health

This year, about 70,000 people aged 12 and older nationwide, including many in Wisconsin, will be randomly selected and asked to participate in the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). County and tribal health and human services departments and organizations that work in the mental health and substance use field may receive inquiries from the public about the legitimacy of this study. It is not a marketing survey. Sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the NSDUH gathers important information that is needed to make sound policy decisions regarding prevention, treatment, and recovery programs.

### What are the objectives of this survey?

The NSDUH began in 1971 and is conducted every year. The objectives are to:

- Provide accurate data on the level and patterns of alcohol, illicit drugs (including non-medical use of prescription drugs), and tobacco use, misuse, and abuse.
- Track trends in the use of alcohol, tobacco, and various types of drugs.
- Assess the consequences of substance use, misuse, and abuse.
- Identify groups at high risk for substance use, misuse, and abuse.

### How is the survey conducted?

SAMHSA has contracted with a research organization, RTI International, to conduct the survey. A limited number of home addresses in Wisconsin will be randomly selected for the survey. A letter will be sent to these households explaining the study and informing them that a professional field interviewer will soon be visiting with the residents. During the visit, the interviewer, an employee of RTI International, will spend a few minutes talking with all residents of the household to determine if someone will be selected to participate in an interview. It is possible that no one in the household will be selected for an interview.

### What will happen during the interview?

A professional field interviewer personally visits each selected person to administer the interview. Individuals answer most of the interview questions in private and enter their responses directly into a computer so even the interviewer does not know the answer entered. No prior computer skills are necessary. For some items, the interviewer reads the questions aloud and enters the responses given into the computer. The interview takes about an hour to complete. Individuals who complete the interview receive \$30 in cash at the end of the interview. All information provided is kept confidential and only used for statistical purposes.

### **What types of questions are asked?**

NSDUH questions cover drug knowledge and experience as well as general health topics. The responses of people who do not use drugs are just as important as the responses of people who do.

### **How are the data from the survey used?**

Many public and private individuals and groups use the data from the NSDUH for reporting on drug use, misuse, and abuse; monitoring the effectiveness of drug control strategies; and policymaking. For example, the Department of Health Services uses the data in the biennial [Wisconsin Epidemiological Profile on Alcohol and Drug Use](#).

Thank you for your support of the NSDUH. A list of other frequently asked questions about this survey is available on the NSDUH's [website](#).

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