

Dear Coach,

The Tennessee Department of Health, in conjunction with **TNSTRONG**, would like to invite your softball team to take a leadership role in helping to keep Tennessee's youth tobacco-free.

TNSTRONG is the statewide, youth-led initiative to take down tobacco in Tennessee. **TNSTRONG** stands for "**Tennessee Stop Tobacco and Revolutionize Our New Generation**". **TNSTRONG** works to raise awareness about the harms caused by all kinds of tobacco products, prevent initiation of youth use, and provide support to youth who would like to stop using tobacco.

Thanks to the efforts of **TNSTRONG** and statewide anti-tobacco programs, youth use of cigarettes has declined from 25.5% in 2007 to 9.4% in 2017, but we still have work to do.

E-cigarettes are sometimes called "e-cigs," "vapes," "JUUL," "e-hookahs," "vape pens," and "electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS)". E-cigarettes are one of the newest tobacco products on the market. The US Surgeon General recently declared the use of e-cigarettes among youth an epidemic. In 2018, 1 in 5 of high school students reported using e-cigarettes. Most adults and teens are unaware of the health consequences of using e-cigarette. The majority of e-cigarettes contain highly addictive nicotine and include several cancer-causing chemicals. We'd like youth softball to ban the use of ALL tobacco products by its athletes.

We need your help in putting an end to tobacco use in Tennessee once and for all!

What We ASK:

1. We invite your team members and coaches to sign the attached tobacco-free pledge, promising not to use **ANY** tobacco or electronic cigarette (vape) product.
2. Please scan and email the signed pledge form to tnstrong.health@tn.gov. Once we have received your completed Tobacco-free Team Pledge, we will send you the "We Struck out Tobacco" banner. You are encouraged to have your team sign the banner, as well. We encourage you to keep this banner, because it will be used in subsequent years, if your team chooses to continue to be tobacco-free.
3. Take a picture of your team holding the banner and post to your schools/team social media pages, tagging #TNTobaccoFree and #TNSTRONG. These will be shared and retweeted across the TNSTRONG and Tennessee Department of Health social media accounts. Please forward a link to our email address: tnstrong.health@tn.gov

What You GET:

1. You will get one 3'x5' all-weather banner declaring your team tobacco free that you may hang on your outfield fencing or another area of prominence.
2. Once we have your team's picture, your team will receive a **TNSTRONG five-gallon bucket that is filled with 18 Diamond practice softballs.**

The pledge form is also available on the TNSTRONG website at www.tn.gov/tnstrong. Please share this information with your middle and high school baseball teams.

We encourage you to be the **FIRST** softball team in your region or district to accept this challenge!

Help **YOUR** athletes become part of the **FIRST** tobacco-free generation!

Sincerely,

TNSTRONG Staff
Tennessee Department of Health
Tobacco Prevention and Control
Team Tnstrong.health@tn.gov
(615) 532-6946 office



Need help quitting:

- If you have members of your coaching staff who are using tobacco products, and need assistance with quitting, please refer them to our Tennessee Tobacco QuitLine (1-800-QUIT-NOW or online at www.tnquitline.org). There they will be paired with a “quit coach” who can support them through the quitting process. The QuitLine can also provide two weeks of nicotine replacement therapy (nicotine patches) at no cost to help them get started.
- If you have players on your team who are using tobacco products including e- cigarettes and need assistance with quitting, please refer them to <https://teen.smokefree.gov> or text QUIT to 47848 to join a free text to quit program.

