

Describing Inclusion of State-Developed Disability Items on Youth Risk Behavior
 Surveillance System (YRBSS) In the United States

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The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) monitors health behaviors among youth using a standardized questionnaire. While standard disability items are used in health monitoring surveys for adults, there are none in the YRBSS. This study examines state-specific methods to capture disability in youth health surveys, highlighting the need for more inclusive and unified health monitoring through disability status collection.

Methods:

A web search was conducted for state YRBSS reports and materials from 2018-2023 across all 50 states and D.C. Relevant data such as year(s) of YRBSS participation, agencies administering YRBSS, and inclusion of disability items were compiled in a spreadsheet. For states that include disability item(s), the items and response options were also recorded for further analysis.

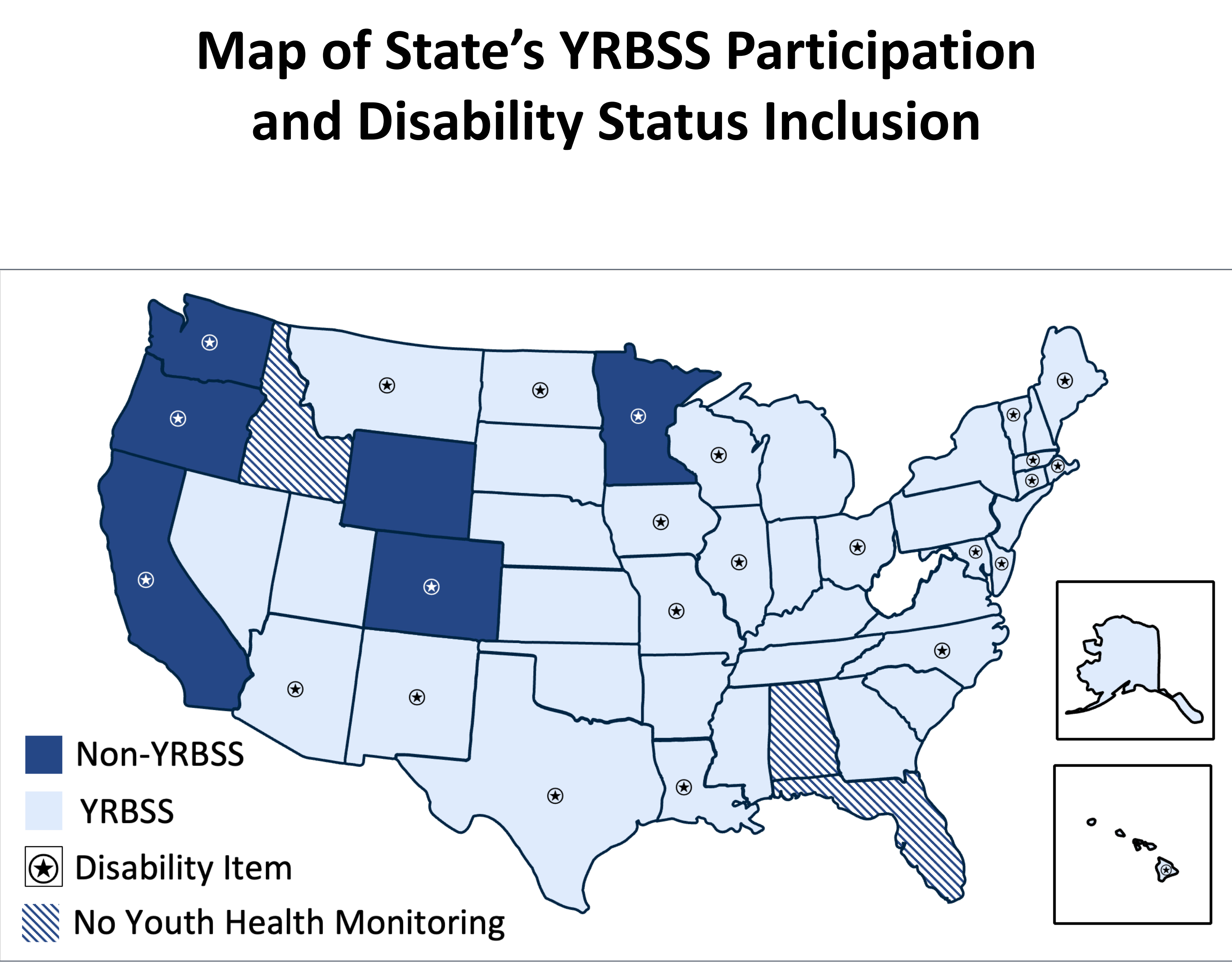


Figure 1: U.S. map color-coded based on state YRBSS data from 2018-2023, showing YRBSS participating states, non-participating states, and which states collect youth disability data as apart of a youth risk behavior monitoring system.

Discussion:

The map shows 80% (n=41) of states participate in the YRBSS, suggesting a unified approach to youth health data collection is feasible. However, only 49% (n=20) include disability items, indicating a need for standardized measures. The analysis (Table 1) reveals diverse questions, highlighting inconsistencies in defining and measuring disability. This variety complicates drawing conclusions due to the lack of standardization.

Conclusion:

Including disability as a demographic variable in the YRBSS helps standardize data collection, enabling a better description of how disability affects health behaviors as adults. This can inform targeted interventions to address barriers that youth with disabilities face in efforts to achieve equitable health outcomes in adulthood.

References

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Frequency Table of of State-Developed Disability Items and Categorization

Education Disability Item On YRBSS	Functional Health Disability Item On YRBSS	Frequency	Percentage
Are you receiving special education services as part of an individual education plan or IEP?		3	15%
At school do you have an IEP or 504 accommodation?		1	5%
Do you have any physical disabilities or long-term health problems? (Long-term means 6 months or more.)		8	40%
Do you have a disability or long-term health problem that keeps you from doing everyday activities such as bathing, getting dressed, doing schoolwork, playing sports, or being with friends?		1	5%
Do you have any long-term emotional problems or learning disabilities? (Long-term means 6 months or more.)		6	30%
Because of a physical, mental, or emotional problem, do you have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions?		3	15%
Do you have any ongoing physical, mental, or emotional disabilities or impairments that limit your daily activities?		1	5%
Are you deaf or do you have serious difficulty hearing?		1	5%
Do you have serious difficulty seeing, even when wearing glasses?		1	5%
During the past 12 months did you receive help from a resource teacher, speech therapist, or other special education teacher at school?		2	10%
Do you have a disability or long-term health problem that keeps you from doing everyday activities such as bathing, getting dressed, doing school work, playing sports, or being with friends?		1	5%
Has a doctor or nurse ever told you you have epilepsy or a seizure disorder?		1	5%
You still have a seizure disorder?		1	5%
Do you consider yourself to have a disability?		1	5%
Are you limited in any way in any activities because of a disability or health problem?		1	5%
Do you have trouble learning, remembering, or concentrating because of a disability or health problem?		1	5%
Bullied because of a disability (generalized questions)		1	5%

Table 1: Table lists all state-developed disability questions included in the YRBSS from 2018-2023, categorized by type and showing the frequency and percentage of states that asked each question.