



2025 ANNUAL REPORT



A Message from our Director

From Humble Beginnings to a National Powerhouse.

Over the past twenty-five years, the Institute for Nicotine and Tobacco Studies (INTS) has evolved alongside the changing landscape of tobacco, nicotine, and public health. What began in 2000 as a New Jersey-focused tobacco surveillance and evaluation program has grown into a nationally and internationally recognized institute addressing the full continuum of nicotine and tobacco research, treatment, policy, and education. This first annual report marks an important milestone for INTS and offers an opportunity to reflect on both our history and our trajectory as an institute.

Our core mission remains steadfast: to reduce—and ultimately eliminate—tobacco-caused morbidity and mortality in New Jersey, across the United States, and globally. We pursue this mission through rigorous, policy-relevant research; the delivery of evidence-based tobacco dependence treatment; dissemination of findings to key stakeholders; and the training of the next generation of tobacco control researchers and treatment providers.

This past year marked a period of both reflection and momentum as INTS entered its first five-year review as a chancellor-level institute. During fiscal year (FY) 2025, *Rutgers University—led by INTS core faculty—emerged as the number one university in both the Big Ten and the nation for tobacco-focused NIH research*, with Rutgers being awarded nearly **\$13 million**, a milestone that underscores the Institute's leadership, growth, and impact in this field.

With this level of sustained federal support, INTS continues to generate high-impact science that informs policy, regulation, and public health practice. Our work spans tobacco regulatory science, rapid surveillance, marketing and industry monitoring, law and policy analysis, and clinical treatment—ensuring that evidence moves efficiently from research to action.

None of this work would be possible without the dedication of our faculty, staff, trainees, collaborators, and partners. I am deeply grateful for their expertise, creativity, and unwavering commitment to public health. Thank you for your continued support and engagement with the Institute for Nicotine and Tobacco Studies.

— **Cristine Delnevo, PhD, MPH**, *Director of the Institute for Nicotine and Tobacco Studies and Distinguished Professor in the Department of Health Behavior, Society, and Policy at the Rutgers School of Public Health.*



Cristine Delnevo

INTS Roadmap

Building on a strong foundation, INTS has experienced remarkable growth and expanded significantly since inception, welcoming new team members and increasing our capacity to conduct innovative research, advance public health, and deepen community engagement. Below is a roadmap highlighting some of our changes and growth over the last 25 years.

2000: Founded as Tobacco Surveillance and Evaluation Research Program (TSERP)

INTS, originally called TSERP, began with **3 faculty** and **6 staff members**

2014: Renamed Center for Tobacco Studies (CTS) at SPH

2019: Status changed to chancellor level center

2023: Renamed Institute for Nicotine and Tobacco Studies (INTS)

2006: Awarded first NIH grant (R03)

2007: Renamed Center for Tobacco Surveillance and Evaluation Research (CTSER)

2010: Awarded first R01 NIH grant



INTS grew more than **400% since 2000**

INTS now has **21 core faculty** and **26 full-time staff**

INTS Overview

The Institute for Nicotine and Tobacco Studies (INTS) is one of the nation's leading tobacco-focused research centers. It seeks to reduce and ultimately eliminate tobacco-related morbidity and mortality in New Jersey, the U.S., and globally. INTS does this via research that informs interventions, regulations, and policies; the delivery of evidence-based tobacco treatment; dissemination of research findings to key stakeholders; and training of tobacco treatment providers and the next generation of tobacco control researchers.

Over the past two decades, the Institute has been awarded approximately **\$72 million** in extramural funding. INTS also serves the citizens of the state and has treated over **7,000 smokers** in New Jersey. INTS's continuing education program has a broad reach – over **3,000 clinicians** have been trained as tobacco treatment specialists from all **50 states and over 11 countries**.

Purpose and Mission



Research that informs interventions, regulations and policies.



Delivery of evidence-based tobacco treatment.



Dissemination of research findings to key stakeholders.



Training of tobacco treatment providers and the next generation of tobacco control researchers.



Centers & Programs

- ◆ **Tobacco Centers of Regulatory Science**
- ◆ **Center of Excellence for Rapid Surveillance of Tobacco**
- ◆ **Tobacco Dependence Program**
- ◆ **Tobacco Industry Marketing Program**
- ◆ **Tobacco Control Law & Policy Resource Center**



Center for Rapid Surveillance of Tobacco

Led by Cristine Delnevo, this **\$18 million grant** (U01CA278695) to fund the Rutgers Center for Rapid Surveillance of Tobacco (CRST) enables researchers to rapidly identify and analyze critical information in real time and generate timely information for appropriate regulatory and enforcement action by the FDA. Through rapid surveillance of tobacco product marketing, the tobacco product marketplace, and changes in tobacco product use behaviors, CRST aims to generate, refine, and evaluate signals of interest.

In addition to several faculty members from INTS, the project involves co-investigators from:

- Wake Forest University
- Stanford University
- University of Kentucky
- The Ohio State University
- Columbia University
- Westat, Inc.

Over the past year, our surveillance activities included store audits; surveys of youth, adults, and tobacco treatment specialists; monitoring retailer scanner sales from convenience stores, as well as online and in print tobacco industry marketing. Based on data from these activities, CRST published **16 scientific manuscripts, disseminated 8 data briefs and factsheets, delivered 15 presentations, and collected approximately 1,062 images of confiscated tobacco and nicotine products** from schools across the country.



Tobacco Centers of Regulatory Science

The Tobacco Centers of Regulatory Science (TCORS) generates critical research to inform the FDA's regulation of tobacco products. 2025 was the final year of the University of Pennsylvania and Rutgers TCORS (the second of three cohorts of TCORS) grant, which studied the effects of tobacco marketing, labeling, and packaging on users and non-users of tobacco products (Award U54CA229973). **In total, there were over 180 publications published during this time, with 25 being published within the final year of the grant in FY 2025.**

Funded in the second and third cohort of these centers, the Center for the Assessment of Tobacco Regulations (CAToR) based at the University of Michigan, led by Rafael Meza, David Mendez, and David Levy (MPIs), is funded to provide evidence-based and expert-informed modeling of the behavioral and public health impacts of FDA tobacco rules or other regulatory actions, focusing on Impact Analysis, Behavior and Health Effects as Scientific Domains (Award U54CA229974). Center and project/core lead investigators from Rutgers include Rafael Meza, who joined Rutgers in September 2025, and Jamie Tam, who joined Rutgers in August 2025.

Tobacco Dependence Program

The Tobacco Dependence Program (TDP) is dedicated to reducing the harm associated with tobacco use through education, treatment, research, and advocacy. TDP is a nationally recognized specialty treatment site offering state-of-the-art, comprehensive tobacco dependence treatment to highly dependent tobacco users and those with various co-morbidities. This year, the program delivered tobacco treatment to over **150 clients** and facilitated more than **1,300 clinical encounters**. TDP continues to be a model program for delivering evidence-based tobacco treatment and works closely with the New Jersey Department of Health to coordinate the care delivered at the New Jersey Quitcenters.

Another of TDP's primary initiatives is its Tobacco Treatment Specialist (TTS) Training, which is nationally accredited by the Council for Tobacco Treatment Training Programs (CTTTP), a distinction held by only a select group of programs across the country. The TTS Training is a prerequisite for health professionals to become eligible for national certification in tobacco treatment.



Monica J. Gilles, Michael Steinberg, & Kimberly Jordan-Casarona

Over the past fiscal year, the TTS Training program has successfully trained **54 participants across nine states**, from New Jersey to California, with the farthest participant joining internationally from Qatar. The program has also expanded its reach by implementing new marketing strategies, and these efforts will continue as TDP works to ensure that high-quality tobacco treatment and training are accessible and effective.

TDP remains committed to advancing tobacco dependence treatment research. In collaboration with faculty from the University of Minnesota and the Rutgers Cancer Institute, the program continued an NIH-funded study to assess cigarette relighting behaviors and the impact these behaviors may have on efforts to quit smoking. The study is ongoing, and staff continue to share preliminary findings at professional conferences. Overall, TDP faculty have published **6 scientific manuscripts**, presented **5 scientific presentations**, and given **7 invited lectures** this past year on various topics related to tobacco treatment.

Tobacco Control Law & Policy Resource Center

The Tobacco Control Law and Policy Resource Center (TCLPRC) is a new center that aims to provide tobacco control legal and policy guidance and other services. TCLPRC is led by Kevin Schroth, an attorney with years of tobacco control policy making experience and a veteran of litigation involving the tobacco industry.

Within INTS, TCLPRC provides a legal and policy perspective that complements the work of other INTS researchers. Externally, TCLPRC provides legal and policy insight and expertise to government officials, advocates, researchers, and other stakeholders on local, state, and federal levels.

Since its inception, **TCLPRC has testified and written in support of more than a dozen bills on municipal, city, and state levels**, and federal regulations, and will continue to provide even more assistance as they progress. In the upcoming fiscal year, TCLPRC will continue to support sensible ongoing efforts and explore more opportunities to advance sensible reforms.



Tobacco Industry Marketing Program

The Tobacco Industry Marketing (TIM) team monitors multiple tobacco industry marketing channels, including print magazine, business-to-business publications, social media, brand websites, and direct-to-consumer mail and emails. Important information of interest to tobacco control researchers and federal regulators, such as industry innovations in new products, packaging, or advertising, is disseminated through weekly TIM Alert newsletters. Throughout the past fiscal year, there have been **46 TIM Alerts** sent to over **1,300 subscribers**.

Tobacco industry marketing materials are also collected and categorized in an online public archive called Trinkets and Trash (Trinkets), a resource used by researchers and educators. Visitors to the Trinkets website (trinketsandtrash.org) can search for, read descriptions of, and utilize images of current and historical tobacco products and advertisements.



Office of Research

Over the past several years, INTS has substantially built up its research office along with associated infrastructure and staffing, providing support to its growing faculty on grant development, submission, and post-award management. Research activities included informative and productive monthly research meetings for INTS members, as well as grant feedback systems, including “Specific Aims Pitches,” Works in Progress (WIP) meetings, review by INTS leadership, and mock grant review sessions.

INTS faculty members were extremely productive in grant submissions in FY 2025, submitting **40 research grant proposals**, including **17 primary federal applications**.

Office of Finance

This year, the INTS Office of Finance continued to play a critical role in advancing the INTS mission through sound financial stewardship and operational excellence. Throughout federal and university transitions, the office fostered strong collaboration and provided exceptional support to faculty, staff, and students, offering guidance on grant administration, budget management, and procurement processes. These efforts ensured that academic and research activities remained uninterrupted and well-resourced. Looking ahead, we plan to expand our team to meet the demands of a growing portfolio of awards and further strengthen our capacity to serve the INTS community.

Office of Central Administration

In FY 2025, the INTS Administrative Team grew significantly. With the addition of Assistant Director Jeannie Garmon and several new staff members, the team has expanded into a diverse group with broad skills.

The Administrative Team helps translate institutional priorities into action. The team is responsible for the success of the day-to-day administrative functions, as well as the information technology (IT), human resources, and marketing and communications needs of the Institute. The administrative staff collaborate closely with faculty, staff, trainees, and students to provide efficient, responsive support within the context of a rapidly growing Institute. The team is a critical contributor to helping advance the Institute’s mission and the success of the Institute’s research enterprise over the past year.



The Office of Survey Methods and Data Analysis

The Office of Survey Methods and Data Analysis (SMDA) provides comprehensive research design, methodological consultation, and data analytic support to investigators across the Institute. Core services include, but are not limited to, drafting, refining, and testing survey items; determining appropriate sample sizes; selecting statistical approaches aligned with study goals; and conducting both descriptive summaries and advanced multivariable and multivariate modeling. SMDA also supports the interpretation of analytic findings and the development of manuscripts, abstracts, and other scholarly products.

In the past fiscal year, SMDA supported approximately 27 projects. SMDA remains committed to advancing rigorous methodological approaches in tobacco and nicotine research and adjacent health domains. Current priorities include streamlining workflow processes, expanding analytic and data science capacity, and enhancing the research support infrastructure available to investigators across INTS.

Marketing & Communications

In FY 2025, INTS welcomed Paige Geraldts as the new Marketing and Communications Coordinator, marking the first step towards building a strategic team effort to expand the Institute's reach and enhance its reputation. With the addition of Paige, INTS was able to design and procure INTS-branded merchandise for tabling events, expand promotion and marketing of the Tobacco Dependence Program's Tobacco Treatment Specialist (TTS) Training, increase the consistency of social media activity, launch a monthly e-newsletter to improve communication, and redesign and update the INTS website. These efforts have enhanced INTS's visibility and engagement across multiple platforms. Below are select highlights of that success.



70

social posts



1,777

clicks



976

reactions
& likes



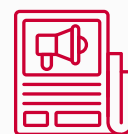
231

shares



32,223

impressions



7

e-newsletters
sent

Grants & Awards

Over FY 2025, INTS faculty members have been remarkably successful at securing competitive external funding from federal, state, and private funding sponsors, advancing research across a variety of domains.

31 active awards led by

17 PIs

➤ **\$11,424,345**

total dollars awarded to core faculty

Led by INTS core faculty, Rutgers ranks #1 in the Big Ten and the nation in tobacco-focused NIH research.

40 award submissions led by

15 PIs

➤ **\$42,628,879**

total dollar amount of award submissions

New Awards in FY 2025

◆ **NCI R61 - Implementation, Reach, and Impact of Court-Ordered Tobacco Corrective Statement Postings at the Point-of-Sale**

PI: Olivia Wackowski (INTS), Daniel Giovenco (Columbia University), and Melissa Mercincavage (INTS).

This time-sensitive study uses a variety of research methods, including retailer audits, eye-tracking, and longitudinal surveys with adults and youth, to examine the implementation, reach, and impact of court-ordered “corrective statements” in about 220,000 tobacco retailers across the U.S. between October 2023 – July 2025 (R61CA297714).

◆ **NCI R01 - Evaluating Implementation of Tobacco 21 Laws in the U.S.**

PI: Mary Hrywna (INTS) and Amanda Kong (Wake Forest University).

This study examines how tobacco product types, retailer characteristics, and neighborhood-level factors, contribute to T21 implementation in a longitudinal sample of tobacco retailers in New Jersey, North Carolina, and Nevada, the first state to require electronic ID verification for tobacco product purchases (R01CA231139).

◆ **NCI R01 - Advancing the Science on the Impact of Cigar Package Quantity on Cigar Use Behaviors**

PI: Ollie Ganz (INTS), and Jessie Jensen (INTS).

The purpose of this multi-method study is to assess the impact of cigar pack size on consumer behaviors. Small pack sizes may promote initiation while large pack sizes may promote increased consumption, and therefore increase health risks. The proposed research will advance the science on the underlying mechanisms of the associations between cigar pack size and use across geographic and sociodemographic groups to inform public health policy (R01CA297784).

◆ **NCI R00 - Mindfulness-Based Ecological Momentary Intervention for Smoking Cessation Among Cancer Survivors**

PI: Min-Jeong Yang (INTS).

This study will develop a mindfulness-based intervention for smoking cessation tailored for cancer survivors, that delivers intervention content via smartphone application in real-time when risk of smoking relapse is high, resulting in a highly scalable and cost-effective intervention for cancer survivors ready to be tested in a large-scale clinical trial (R00CA271040).

◆ **NIDA R21 - Filling the Gaps: A Multi-Method Investigation of Premium Cigar Use and Marketing to Inform the Regulation of Cigar Products**

PI: Ollie Ganz (INTS).

This multi-method study seeks to understand how premium cigars are used, how they are promoted, and to identify how premium cigar marketing efforts influence product perceptions and behaviors (R21DA062921).

Our Research Impact

Over the past fiscal year, INTS has worked closely with Rutgers Communications and Marketing to bolster its media presence and reach. Through this process and focusing more attention on marketing and communications efforts, INTS has grown its scope and will continue to do so in the coming fiscal year.



82 research
publications



255 times INTS research was
covered in the media



2,386 total engagement



215 M total audience reach
of media articles

New Faculty Faces

Lauren Pacek, PhD

Dr. Pacek is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Medicine, Division of General Internal Medicine at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. Prior to coming to INTS, Dr. Pacek served as an Assistant Professor at Duke University School of Medicine and an Epidemiologist at the FDA Center for Tobacco Products. Her research interests include tobacco regulatory science, dual/polytobacco use, smoking cessation intervention development for people with HIV, and tobacco use among vulnerable populations.



Min-Jeong Yang, PhD

Dr. Yang is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Health Behavior, Society, & Policy at the Rutgers School of Public Health. Prior to coming to INTS, she completed an NCI-funded T32 behavioral oncology postdoctoral fellowship at Moffitt Cancer Center. Her research seeks to promote health behaviors among individuals who are at increased risk for negative health outcomes, are medically underserved, or marginalized.



Patrick Barnwell, PhD

Dr. Barnwell is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Medicine, Division of General Internal Medicine at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and serves as Assistant Director of our Office of Survey Methods & Data Analysis. Prior to joining INTS, Dr. Barnwell held research positions at Educational Testing Service, where he oversaw psychometric and assessment development projects, and at Johnson & Johnson, where he conducted people analytics and measurement research. His research focuses on advanced survey methodology, psychometrics, information exposure, and behavioral and cognitive measurement to investigate health-related behaviors, with applications in rapid tobacco and nicotine surveillance and regulatory science.



New Faculty Faces Continued



Jeannie Garmon, PhD, MPH

Dr. Garmon is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and our Assistant Director of Administration. Prior to joining INTS, Dr. Garmon served as Director of Research Development at Rutgers-Camden. Her research interests relate to psychosocial factors related to nicotine and tobacco use.

Craig Fryer, DrPH, MPH

During FY 2025, INTS also hosted its first Visiting Professor. Dr. Craig Fryer served as a Presidential Visiting Faculty Fellow from February 2024 through January 2025 and collaborated with Drs. Kymberle Sterling and Cristine Delnevo on several projects. He is an Associate Professor at the University of Maryland, School of Public Health, Department of Behavioral and Community Health, and Associate Director of their Center for Health Equity.



Trainee Spotlight

Over the years, INTS postdoctoral trainees have been highly successful. On average, those who completed at least a year of training published **7 peer-reviewed papers** (range: 4 to 13) and **10 presentations** at regional, national, or international scientific meetings (range: 5 to 11). Many past and current trainees have also secured career development awards from the NIH, including through funding mechanisms available from the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute on Drug Abuse.



**Charity Ntansah,
PhD, MPH**

Postdoctoral Fellow
Advisor: Kymberle Sterling

Presidential Postdoctoral Fellow



**Meagan Robichaud,
PhD, MPH**

Postdoctoral Fellow
Advisor: Cristine Delnevo



**Caitlin Weiger,
PhD, MHS**

Postdoctoral Fellow
Advisor: Olivia Wackowski

NIDA K99: Misperceptions that prevent complete switching to e-cigarettes among adult smokers: A more nuanced communication strategy of body text



**Allison Glasser,
PhD, MPH**

Postdoctoral Fellow
Advisor: Andrea Villanti

NIDA K99: Effects and equity impacts of cannabis policy on tobacco and cannabis co-use in young adults



**Destiny Diaz,
PhD**

Postdoctoral Fellow
Advisor: Olivia Wackowski

NCI K00: Use and Impact of Quantitative Information in Tobacco Risk Communications



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