

ODS Update Summer 2023

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ODS Update A NEWSLETTER FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Strengthening Knowledge and Understanding of Dietary Supplements

Summer 2023

Getting To Know New ODS Director Stefan M. Pasiakos

Dr. Pasiakos joined ODS as its new director on July 16, 2023.

What interests you most about serving as ODS Director?

The ODS mission—providing unbiased, evidence-based information on the safety and potential health benefits of dietary supplements to the public—is noble and something I greatly value. In some ways, I have done the same for many years with my own research, studying the role of certain dietary supplements on the health and performance of U.S. Army soldiers. Having the opportunity to do this on a much larger scale and now lead ODS is not only an honor, but also humbling and exciting.



What insights from your past positions do you bring to the role?

The importance of putting people first, building and maintaining effective collaborations, and how critical it is to be forward leaning and articulate a clear vision for the future are insights I gained in my past positions. Programmatic and professional success are the result of leading people and not simply managing the day-to-day routine of executing a program. Trusting and focusing on your team, providing opportunities to excel, and leveraging their expertise will foster professional and programmatic success.

What challenges do you foresee?

I fully anticipate, but also welcome, the challenges associated with being new to an organization, let alone being its director. I have worked for the federal government for 15 years as a soldier, scientist, and leader, and while there are many administrative similarities between NIH and the Department of Defense, NIH is new to me, and it will take time to learn the system, adapt, and become fully integrated. As with any leadership position, I anticipate having to make difficult decisions, as is required of leaders. However, I am committed to doing so in the best interest of the Office, its people, and our mission.

Read more about Dr. Pasiakos' career on the [ODS website](#).

News You Can Use

Dietary Supplement Research Practicum Video Recordings Available



Did you miss the three-day ODS practicum in May? All presentations from the Mary Frances Picciano Dietary Supplement Research Practicum were recorded and are [available for viewing](#). ODS also now has several [audio-described videos on YouTube](#). These videos include narratives that describe what is happening on screen to make them more accessible for people who are blind or have low vision. Selections include the entirety of the 2023 practicum presentations as well as several ODS Seminars.

ODS Seminar Series



The [ODS Seminar Series](#) features webinars on research that's relevant to dietary supplements and related topics. The seminars are virtual meetings. [Contact ODS](#) to receive viewing information. Upcoming seminars include:

Wednesday, September 13, 2023, 11:00 a.m. (ET)

Updates from the FDA Office of Dietary Supplement Programs

Cara Welch, Ph.D.—Office of Dietary Supplement Programs, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, Food and Drug Administration, College Park, MD

Wednesday, October 11, 2023, 11:00 a.m. (ET)

Dietary Supplements and Neurological Resilience in Aging

Lukasz Ciesla, Ph.D.—University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL

New/Revised ODS Dietary Supplement Fact Sheets

- Dietary Supplements for Immune Function and Infectious Diseases for [health professionals](#) (new)
- Carnitine for consumers in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) (new)
- Multivitamin/mineral Supplements for [health professionals](#) and for consumers in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) (update)
- Vitamin B6 for [health professionals](#) and for consumers in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) (update)

ODS Co-Funding Opportunities

ODS provides funding support to the NIH Institutes, Centers, and Offices (ICOs) through its co-funding program. Co-funding allows ODS to share the costs of NIH extramural dietary supplement-related research project grants, training and career development grants, and scientific conferences, with primary ICOs. See the [list](#) of active ODS co-funding opportunities.

Learn more about ODS' [co-funding opportunities](#).



ODS Staff News



Jaime Gahche, Ph.D., M.P.H., has been named Director of the Population Studies Program, following the retirement of Nancy Potischman, Ph.D. (see article below). Dr. Gahche joined ODS in 2017 as a nutritional epidemiologist. Her work focuses on assessing the use of dietary supplements in the U.S. and investigating the role of dietary supplements in disease prevention and health promotion, using data from health surveys and epidemiologic studies. Learn more about [Dr. Gahche](#) and the [ODS Population Studies Program](#).



After 34 years at NIH, Nancy Potischman, Ph.D., retired on April 30, 2023. Since 2016, Dr. Potischman, a nutritional epidemiologist, directed the Population Studies Program at ODS. She studied U.S. survey data to evaluate dietary supplement use and its associated health effects. Through her work, she reported that use of dietary supplements containing iodine among pregnant and lactating women and use of vitamin D and iron supplements among exclusively breastfed infants are below current recommendations, and that older adults take multiple micronutrient and botanical supplements. She now works part time as a consultant on ODS projects and enjoys having more time to travel and visit family. To learn more about Dr. Potischman, see the [NIH Record](#).

Paul R. Thomas, Ed.D., RD, retired on May 31, 2023, after 18 years with ODS. A central member of the ODS communications team, Dr. Thomas powered the library of dietary supplement fact sheets. He wrote and updated many fact sheets, a process requiring hours of research, multiple layers of expert review, limitless patience with editors, and relentless monitoring for research updates. Each month, ODS fact sheets are viewed by more than a million researchers, health care providers, industry representatives, and consumers and are cited in news publications daily. In retirement, Dr. Thomas plans to read a book a week, grow fabulous produce, cook inspired meals, ride his bicycle, and dream up new projects.



Karen Regan, M.S., RD, ODS Nutritionist, retired on July 31, 2023, after 21 years at NIH. At ODS, Ms. Regan managed the [Computer Access to Research in Dietary Supplements](#) (CARDS) database; developed data collection and portfolio analyses procedures and ad hoc training; and oversaw the development and optimization of the [Research, Condition, and Disease Categories](#) (RCDC) used to characterize and report NIH's investments in nutrition and dietary supplement research. Ms. Regan juggled many tasks, and her absence leaves many pairs of shoes to fill. In retirement, she looks forward to hiking, skiing, traveling, and volunteering throughout the world.

Grantees of the CARBON Program Met in July



Grantees from five centers funded through the Consortium for Advancing Research on Botanical and Other Natural Products (CARBON) Program met July 27, 2023 to share and discuss their research.



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About ODS

The [Office of Dietary Supplements \(ODS\)](#) is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the nation's medical research agency—supporting scientific studies that turn discovery into health.

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