

ODS Special Supplement

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Special Supplement

Strengthening Knowledge
and Understanding of
Dietary Supplements

January 17, 2023

Joseph M. Betz, Ph.D., ODS Acting Director, Retires

Joseph M. Betz retired on December 31, 2022, after serving as the Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS) Acting Director for 4.5 years. Dr. Betz served at ODS for 20 years and attained a total of 33 years of federal government service.



Robert W. Eisinger, Ph.D., Acting Director, Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives; and Senior Advisor to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director said that he “would like to acknowledge and express my appreciation for the outstanding leadership that Joe has provided to ODS. We wish him the best of health and happiness as he begins this next phase of his life and career.”

While the selection process for a new permanent ODS Director continues, David M. Murray, Ph.D., Director of the NIH Office of Disease Prevention (ODP), began serving as Acting Director of ODS on January 1, 2023. Dr. Murray previously worked with ODS, overseeing the office’s activities from 2012 to 2020 during the time when ODS was a component within ODP. Learn more about Dr. Murray on the [ODS website](#).

Dr. Betz joined ODS in 2002 as the first Director of the [Analytical Methods and Reference Materials \(AMRM\)](#) Program, where he oversaw several large intra- and extra-governmental initiatives that provided stakeholders with robust validated analytical methods and reference materials for accurately and reliably measuring the composition of natural products in research, industry, and regulatory settings. In June 2018, Dr. Betz was appointed ODS Acting Director. He guided ODS staff through:

- An NIH Office of the Director review of ODS programs and accomplishments
- The elevation of ODS to an office reporting to the Director of the NIH Office of the Director’s Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives
- A successful transition to remote work due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- The drafting of a new strategic plan
- The production of ODS’s 25th anniversary symposium
- The launch of a new Dietary Supplement Research Coordinating Committee

An internationally recognized pharmacognosist, Dr. Betz is an expert on botanical identification and phytochemistry. In graduate school in the 1980s his doctoral research was on natural product drug discovery. While in graduate school he also worked with the nascent herbal products industry to develop analytical

methods for authentication of ginseng products for the purpose of distinguishing between authentic *Panax* species and species falsely sold as ginseng.

After earning his doctorate in pharmacognosy, he spent 12 years as a research chemist in the Division of Natural Products at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition. While at FDA, Dr. Betz led a team that worked closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to identify a dangerous contaminant in L-tryptophan supplements. In addition, after FDA identified serious adverse events associated with *Ephedra* supplements, Dr. Betz developed analytical methods to be used for enforcement actions on products containing ephedrine. He created and directed FDA's Natural Toxicants in Food Plants Program and expanded the program to include development of analytical methods for bioactive substances in dietary supplements. Before joining ODS, he was Vice President for Scientific and Technical Affairs at the American Herbal Products Association, where he worked to improve industry supply chain transparency and traceability.

When Congress mandated that ODS support collaborative efforts to validate analytical methods and develop reference materials for dietary supplement ingredients, Dr. Betz joined ODS to build and manage the AMRM Program. As AMRM Director, he developed needs statements, requests for proposals, interagency agreements, statements of work, funding opportunities, and program announcements.

Dr. Betz is an Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Pharmacology and Physiology at the Georgetown University School of Medicine. His research has included developing analytical methods for botanical quality and determination of bioactive plant secondary metabolites. He's well versed in food law, drug law, dietary supplement regulations, and good manufacturing practices. He has authored more than 100 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, has lectured extensively, and has been a member of many expert committees. He is a member of the American Society of Pharmacognosy, a fellow of the Association of Official Analytical Collaboration (AOAC International), past chair of the Editorial Board for the Journal of AOAC International, and a member of the United States Pharmacopeia's Expert Committee on Dietary Supplements. He also serves on expert scientific advisory committees for the governments of Canada and Hong Kong.

Dr. Betz has earned numerous awards, including the Norman R. Farnsworth Award for Excellence in Botanical Research, the Varro E. Tyler Prize for outstanding scientific contributions to the field of dietary supplements, the Herbal Insight Award for contributions to the botanical sciences, the AOAC International Harvey W. Wiley Award for Excellence and Development of Analytical Methods, and the G.H. Neil Towers Award. He was recognized by the NIH Office of the Director with an Honor Award for his contributions to the establishment and development of the ODS Vitamin D Standardization Program.



At ODS, we know Joe as a thoughtful and dedicated mentor, and a compassionate leader. He's also a wearer of bowties and a collector of lawn and desktop flamingoes. We're fortunate to have enjoyed working with Joe and have benefited from his leadership for the past 4.5 years.



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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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