

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | October 27, 2026

AHPA, CRN, CHPA and UNPA Urge NIH to Preserve Independence of Office of Dietary Supplements

Joint comments warn proposed reorganization could weaken scientific research, add bureaucracy and diminish an office Congress established to advance understanding of dietary supplements

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Four leading dietary supplement trade organizations are collectively urging the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to reconsider a proposed reorganization that would place the Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS) under the Office of Nutrition Research (ONR), warning that the change could undermine ODS's distinct congressional mandate, diminish its scientific reach, and create unnecessary bureaucratic barriers to advancing the science for dietary supplements.

In joint comments submitted to NIH, the American Herbal Products Association (AHPA), Consumer Healthcare Products Association (CHPA), Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN), and United Natural Products Alliance (UNPA) called for retaining ODS as a stand-alone office within NIH's Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives (DPCPSI), while pursuing stronger collaboration with ONR.

The organizations emphasized that cooperation between the two offices is both desirable and achievable without reducing ODS's organizational standing or independence. The joint comments also connect the importance of sustained supplement research to the Administration's Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) priorities, which recognize the health benefits of select high-quality supplements as an area warranting scientific investigation.

Congress established ODS under the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994 (DSHEA) to advance scientific understanding of dietary supplements and their contributions to health. Its responsibilities also include serving as a principal advisor to senior federal health officials on dietary supplement issues.

The associations expressed concern that placing ODS within ONR could narrow attention to the full range of scientific questions involving dietary supplements, particularly research involving botanicals, probiotics and other bioactive substances whose effects extend beyond conventional nutrient functions.

They also emphasized the importance of protecting ODS's specialized scientific infrastructure, funding, and staffing to effectively fulfill its statutory mandate.

The associations identified three central concerns with the proposed reorganization:

- Preserving ODS's congressional mandate. ODS was established to provide dedicated scientific leadership and advice on dietary supplements across the federal government. Adding another organizational layer could complicate those responsibilities and diminish its direct access to NIH leadership.
- Protecting the full breadth of supplement science. Research involving dietary supplements encompasses far more than nutritional deficiencies, including the biological effects of botanical ingredients and other substances, product quality, safety, efficacy and interactions with medications.
- Maintaining resources, accountability and scientific independence. The proposed restructuring raises unanswered questions about ODS's leadership authority, staffing, funding, research priorities and ability to coordinate scientific initiatives across NIH.

Should NIH proceed with the proposed reorganization, the organizations urged the agency to first publish a detailed implementation plan for public comment that establishes clear safeguards for ODS's statutory mission, leadership authority, scientific priorities, funding, staffing, advisory responsibilities and public-facing resources. They also recommended a formal evaluation of the restructuring's effects within two years.

The four associations concluded that strengthening collaboration—not diminishing ODS's standing—offers the most effective path forward.

The full joint comments are available [[LINK TO JOINT LETTER](#)].

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About the American Herbal Products Association (AHPA)

Founded in 1982, the American Herbal Products Association (AHPA) is the national trade association and voice of the herbal products industry, representing growers, processors, manufacturers, and marketers of herbs and herbal products — including foods, dietary supplements, cosmetics, and non-prescription drugs — as well as companies providing expert services to the trade. AHPA champions the responsible and sustainable commerce of safe, high-quality herbal goods to ensure informed consumer access.

Learn more at ahpa.org.

About the Consumer Healthcare Products Association (CHPA)

The Consumer Healthcare Products Association (CHPA), founded in 1881, is the national trade association representing the leading manufacturers and marketers of consumer healthcare products, including over-the-counter (OTC) medicines, dietary supplements, and OTC medical devices. CHPA is committed to empowering self-care by ensuring that Americans have access to products they can count on to be reliable, affordable, and convenient, while also delivering new and better ways to get and stay healthy. Visit www.chpa.org.

About the Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN)

The Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN), founded in 1973 and based in Washington, D.C., is the leading trade association representing the dietary supplement and functional food industry. Bringing together manufacturers, ingredient suppliers, and service providers, CRN unites its member

companies around a shared commitment to science, transparency, and responsible business practices —advancing a strong, credible marketplace that supports consumer health and industry growth.

In an increasingly complex regulatory and media environment, CRN serves as the industry's front line —shaping science-based policy, defending market access, and countering misinformation. Through strategic advocacy, self-regulatory leadership, voluntary guidelines, and evidence-based communications, CRN ensures that responsible companies are recognized, protected, and positioned to innovate and compete. Learn more at crnusa.org and follow @CRN_Supplements on X and LinkedIn.

About the United Natural Products Alliance (UNPA)

The United Natural Products Alliance (UNPA) is a premier trade association dedicated to advancing global natural health products. With a commitment to quality, science, and innovation, UNPA collaborates with industry leaders, government agencies, and stakeholders to promote responsible business practices and advocate for standards that ensure consumer safety, access to reliable health information and trained health practitioners.

Through education, research, and advocacy, UNPA along with its members and partners foster industry excellence and leadership that drive growth and integrity in the natural health products community. UNPA serves as a unifying voice, to honor the dietary supplement industry's history, advance the science and protect the health freedom of our consumers. For more information, visit www.unpa.com

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