

Director of the Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity

Ruth Petersen, MD, MPH

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

Dr. Petersen leads the Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity, which provides national leadership on nutrition, physical activity, and obesity prevention through policy and guideline development, surveillance, epidemiological and behavioral research, and technical assistance to states and communities.



Role at CDC

Dr. Petersen is the director of the [Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity](#) (DNPAO) in CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. DNPAO provides national leadership on nutrition, physical activity, and obesity prevention through policy and guideline development, surveillance, epidemiological and behavioral research, and technical assistance to states and communities.

Previous experience

Dr. Petersen has a breadth of experience and leadership from multiple settings, including health care, local and state health departments, national advisory groups, academic settings, the private sector, and global health platforms. Her broad, deep, and diverse experience with populations, partners, and stakeholders are strong assets for leading DNPAO in its focused efforts to prevent chronic diseases through population-wide public health initiatives and health system innovations.

Throughout her career, Dr. Petersen has drawn on her expertise in patient care, health system change, disease prevention, and community engagement to develop and guide programs, research, and policy to improve health behaviors and reduce chronic disease.

Before joining CDC, Dr. Petersen was the chronic disease director for the North Carolina Division of Public Health.

Education

Dr. Petersen received her MD and MPH from the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill. After training in obstetrics and gynecology in Rochester, New York, she completed the UNC preventive medicine residency and a postdoctoral fellowship in health services research.

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