

Endocrine Society comments in response to “Final Draft National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) FY2025-FY2029 Strategic Plan”

Response was informed by members of the Research Affairs Core Committee (RACC) and members of the US Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDC) Task Force.

Comments were submitted by email to ehs-strategic-plan@niehs.nih.gov on July 19, 2024.

Rick Woychik, Ph.D.
Director, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
111 T.W. Alexander Dr.
David P Rall Building, B244
Durham, NC 27709

July 19, 2024

Dear Dr. Woychik,

The Endocrine Society appreciates the incorporation of several of our suggestions into the National Institutes of Environmental Health Science (NIEHS) Strategic Plan for FY2025-FY2029 and welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the final draft of the strategic plan.

Founded in 1916, the Endocrine Society is the world’s oldest, largest, and most active organization devoted to research on hormones and the clinical practice of endocrinology. Our membership consists of over 18,000 scientists, physicians, educators, nurses, and students from more than 120 countries. Many of our members conduct NIEHS-supported research on the health effects of environmental exposures, including endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs).

Research Areas

We thank NIEHS for including several of our research area recommendations submitted in response to the 2023 RFI on the development of this iteration of NIEHS’ Strategic Plan. Understanding the mechanisms of action of chemicals across the lifespan, including during critical windows of susceptibility though multiple developmental stages is essential for the protection of human health. We emphasize that research on early life exposures is critical for developing policies and guidelines to protect human health. We also note the



incorporation of both climate change and health disparities as main research areas and support this focus. To strengthen research on health disparities, we re-emphasize the importance of research that considers geocoding approaches explicitly to inform research on high-exposure hotspots, as it will be essential for predicting and understanding the disproportional health effects of environmental factors of people in underserved and under-resourced areas.

The Endocrine Society appreciates the explicit mention of the utility of animal models in NIEHS research. We reaffirm our support for collaborations with the animal research community, especially comparative endocrinologists, to monitor environmental exposures, including co-exposures to environmental factors, as animals are often exposed to the same environmental factors as their human caretakers.

Cross-cutting themes

Communication between physicians and patients on the interconnected impacts of environmental exposures, including chemical exposures, and climate change are imperative for protecting human health. We want to re-introduce a recommendation from our initial RFI response to offer explicit course content on environmental health in medical school curricula to promote literacy between climate change and health. In the current context, we support the incorporation of clinician engagement into the *Solutions-Focused Research and Translation* as a cross-cutting theme.

Data infrastructure and management is important for supporting environmental health research efforts and promoting effective interventions. The adoption of data repositories for data sharing processes in this strategic plan is appreciated. One recommendation, as mentioned in our initial RFI response, is to strengthen NIEHS' data infrastructure by supporting the creation of a centralized repository for the storage and distribution of biological samples or to provide supplemental funding to researchers to offset the cost of shipping physical samples to other research laboratories.

We thank NIEHS for considering the Endocrine Society's recommendations and welcome opportunities to work together on future projects and initiatives. If we can be of further assistance, please contact Sophia Kaska, Ph.D., Manager of Science Policy and Research Affairs at skaska@endocrine.org.

Sincerely,



John Newell-Price

John Newell-Price, MD, PhD, FRCP
President
Endocrine Society