

**Richard Opiekun:**

Dr. Richard Opiekun is a scientist with the New Jersey Department of Health in the field of environmental public health tracking. Richard received an undergraduate degree in biology in 1990, a Masters degree in Physiology in 1992 and a Masters in Environmental Health and Industrial Hygiene in 1993, all from Temple University and a Ph.D., in Environmental Science, with a concentration in human exposure assessment, from Rutgers University in 1999.

Following post-doctoral training at the Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute under Dr. Panos Georgopoulos, Richard spent several years at the Monell Chemical Senses Center in Philadelphia as a chemosensory scientist, studying the effect of chemical odorants on the human nasal and ocular mucosae and determining irritation thresholds in individuals routinely exposed to these chemicals in work and home environments. His research led to the development of the first ocular irritation and threshold detection instrument and a co-authorship of a textbook chapter on effects of inhaled toxicants on the nose and nasal function.

Upon leaving Monell in 2004, Richard joined the New Jersey Department of Health to develop New Jersey's Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT) program. This CDC-funded program, part of a national network, continuously collects, analyzes, interprets, and disseminates datasets from environmental quality monitoring programs and human exposure and health outcome surveillance programs.

Richard was a member of International Society of Exposure Analysis (ISEA) between 1996 and 2006 and was a charter member and treasurer of the Tri-State Chapter of the ISEA when it was formed in 2008. Richard has been a member of the New Jersey Clean Air Council since 2010, a member of the Governor's Interagency Task Force on the Prevention of Lead Poisoning 2016-2018, and a member of the Rutgers CEED Science Advisory Board since 2018. As New Jersey's Data Coordinator for the NJ EPHT program, Richard co-chaired the CDC team that developed the Tracking metadata standard. He is also a member of several standards committees at CDC, working on development of respiratory health and pollen indicators, and co-chairs a work group focusing on development of community design indicators. Richard continues to give presentations on public health data access and utilization to academics, governmental agencies, and community groups throughout New Jersey.

When not involved in scientific endeavors, Richard is an avid nature and seascape photographer who actively competes in and judges photography competitions. He and his wife live in Ocean County, New Jersey.