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PlantPureCommunities.org

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GROUPS CALL ON GOV. KEMP TO FIGHT COVID HOSPITALIZATIONS VIA NUTRITION STRATEGY

Today, [a letter](#) was released by the nonprofit PlantPure Communities in which thirteen groups from across the State of Georgia called on Governor Kemp to implement a nutrition strategy to minimize the impact of infections and thereby curtail hospitalizations so Georgia's economy can stay open, even if the rate of infection grows. The groups represent over 11,000 Georgians.

Pointing to commentaries ([Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)) by biochemist/nutrition researcher and Cornell Professor Dr. T. Colin Campbell, the groups made three requests of Governor Kemp:

- During press briefings, speak about the **nutrition-related comorbidities** (degenerative diseases like diabetes, heart disease, obesity, hypertension) that increase COVID-19 hospitalization and fatality risk.
- Speak about the power of whole food, plant-based nutrition (vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes and nuts) to defend against the worst effects of COVID-19.
- Publicly pledge to eat these foods for 10 days, thereby encouraging others to take these crucial first steps toward healing and doing their part to keep the economy open!

According to Dr. Campbell's commentaries, there is evidence that suggests that switching to a healthy plant-based diet would not only decrease chronic disease risk, and sometimes reverse these conditions, but also increase the production of COVID-19 antibodies. And, there is ample information showing that this nutritional effect may begin in a matter of days, enough time for people who are not yet infected to strengthen their immune systems. **Nelson Campbell**, PPC Founder and son of Dr. Campbell, said, *"For too long, powerful economic interests have gotten in the way of communicating to the public the health and environmental benefits of a plant-based diet. Now we are suffering through a pandemic, made worse by nutritionally-caused chronic conditions. It's time we let people know that a diet of whole, plant-based foods can help defend against the worst effects of COVID-19."*

By addressing diet-related comorbidities while also strengthening immunity, a nutrition strategy would reduce strain on our hospital system and thereby improve our ability to keep the economy open. **Dr. T. Colin Campbell**, biochemist/nutrition researcher and Cornell professor who serves as an advisor to PlantPure Communities, said, *"It is well past time for the discipline of nutrition, properly defined, to be made available to the public through appropriate policy instruments and to training program curricula for primary caretakers (physicians, nurses) within the medical profession. It also is well past time that primary health care providers be properly reimbursed for counseling in the use of nutrition as a means of prevention and treatment of illnesses and diseases."*

Karee Grier MBA, RD, LD, leader of the Crave Nutrition Workshop Pod in Powder Springs, said, *“Governor Kemp, I appreciate your focus on following the data to inform your decisions regarding COVID-19. I want to draw your attention to the food and health connection mentioned in the commentary above. Eating predominantly plant-based can quickly and dramatically improve comorbid conditions and even improve the immune response to infectious disease. Please help the public become aware of this additional tool to help protect themselves in this pandemic.”*

Marsha Hargreaves, leader of the 500-member Live Plant Strong Savannah Pod, said, *“Enjoying a delicious whole foods plant-based diet provides our bodies with the best nutritional tool kit to thrive and survive the COVID-19 pandemic.”* The Pod has partnered with the local YMCA to offer monthly speakers and weekly programs on the potential health benefits of eating a whole food, plant-based diet.

Benji Kurtz, leader of the 8,000-member Non-Profit Remedy Food Project Pod in Midtown Atlanta, stated, *“If we want to accomplish the goal of lifting the burden on the health systems in our state, there are simple steps that can be taken by every Georgian that are proven by science: consume a whole food, plant-based diet. It makes us healthier and it contributes to saving our environment - not to mention the welfare of the animals with whom we share the planet.”*

Sheryl McDonald of the Georgia Living Well Pod in Adairsville, said, *“Food matters! When you feed your body the right kind of fuel, it can heal itself. Over time, you can regenerate a whole new body. Plant-based food can be your healing medicine.”*

Shobha Swammy of the 500-member Wholesome Alpharetta Pod, said, *“Plant Based Nutrition helps combat and lessens the impact of COVID-19. It helps build immunity and promotes vibrant health.”* During the COVID pandemic, the Pod has offered online cooking and nutrition classes designed to help members use a plant-based diet to fight hypertension, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and obesity—which are among the conditions that can make COVID-19 more severe and deadly.

Sheila Krawchuck of the Plant Powered Gainesville Pod, said, *“We are a small group here in Gainesville, trying to build some community among those of us who know and understand the beneficial power that whole plant foods have over our health. We urge you to help us by spreading this information, for the sake of the hospitals and medical workers, and for all Georgians-- don't they deserve to know about the power plants have to better our health and reduce the severity of COVID-19 infection?”*

Stephanie Johnson of the Whole Health ATL Pod in Midtown Atlanta, said, *“Amid so much uncertainty and division, the people of Georgia need intelligent and caring leadership. As our Governor, I urge you to contemplate the evidence & resources offered here and initiate a statewide Jumpstart for our most vulnerable citizens. Georgia can lead the country, and prove to the world, that WFPB Nutrition is a simple and cost-effective way to support the people and our economy through this pandemic.”* **Josh Wayne MPH, MSW**, Pod Co-Leader, shared, *“A whole food, plant-based diet helped me reverse my debilitating irritable bowel syndrome, and allowed me to live without stomach pain for the first time in nearly a decade. After learning about the impact of chronic disease and now infectious disease on our economy while studying public health at the University of Georgia, I understand that diet can help our state, both by improving health and by keeping the economy open.”*

Tanya Nall from the ROOTS group Pod in Waycross, stated, *"Governor Kemp, I strongly believe that if you want to see Georgia gain a health advantage over COVID-19, then you will encourage our fellow statesmen to take up a plant-based diet. I have made this change in my own life over the past 6 years and I have been able to reverse 5 of 6 autoimmune diseases and drop approx. 130 lbs. I pray that you will educate yourself for your family's sake as well as the benefit of our fellow Georgians. Thank you for leading us through these challenging times."*

Tracy Fettinger, who leads the Whole Living Through Whole Foods Pod in Woodbine, shared, *"Taking care of our health and building our immunity is always important -- even more so in this time of uncertainty with COVID-19. The best way to do both is by eating a diet rich in plants! We've been conducting healthy eating/cooking classes for a while now, trying to help our community take steps towards better health."*

Sharne Ridley, leader of the 1,600 member Plant Based Atlanta Pod in Fayetteville, said, *"A whole-food plant-based lifestyle offers a powerful solution to combat conditions, such as diabetes, obesity, and heart disease, that put people at risk for experiencing complications due to COVID-19. I was able to lower my A1C to a normal level, get my triglycerides below 70, take my CRP from 5.9 to 0.3, and help my son reduce his A1C from 8.0 to 4.5 without medicine. This way of eating works wonders and does so quickly."* **Heather Morgan**, Pod Co-Leader in Midtown said, *"On a standard American diet, the body struggles just to maintain normal function, let alone fight off an invader. On a whole food, plant-based diet, the body thrives and is well-equipped to defend itself. At a time when Georgia faces revenue shortfalls, empowering Georgians to eat healthfully could significantly reduce the burden of healthcare costs to the state budget from chronic diseases or complications from COVID-19."*

The PlantPure Communities Pod Network is the backbone of a grassroots movement of people participating in independent local groups, called "Pods" who promote the benefits of whole food, plant-based nutrition. To date, more than 250,000 people participate in the PlantPure Communities Pod Network in 29 countries.

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