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PlantPureCommunities.org

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Groups Call on Gov. Wolf to Fight COVID Hospitalizations Via Data-Driven Nutrition Strategy

Today, [a letter](#) was released by the nonprofit PlantPure Communities in which six groups from across Pennsylvania called on Governor Wolf to implement a data-driven nutrition strategy to assist with maximizing the opening of the PA economy while minimizing public health risks. The groups represent nearly 3,000 Pennsylvanians.

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

- During press briefings and in e-newsletters, speak about the **diet-related comorbidities** (degenerative diseases like diabetes, heart disease, obesity, hypertension) that increase COVID-19 hospitalization and fatality risk for PA generally, and which disproportionately impact low income communities and other underserved neighborhoods.
- Speak about the power of a whole food, plant-based diet (vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes and nuts) to defend against the worst effects of COVID-19.
- Add consumer-friendly information about whole food, plant-based food choices on your webpage as part of the Guidance and Resources for COVID-19. PlantPure Communities can provide information sheets (with trusted sources) that contain practical guidance for adopting plant-centered eating.
- Publicly pledge to eat these foods for 10 days (we will support you! There is a Global 10-day Jumpstart kicking off soon), thereby encouraging others to take these crucial first steps toward healing and doing their part to 'Keep the Curve Flat' so our economy can stay 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 once it is restarted. **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.”

Sally Lipsky, Leader of the Plant-Based Pittsburgh Pod, said “Whole plant foods have enormous power to prevent, fight, and even reverse chronic diseases. Plant-centered eating can have an immediate, lasting, and profound impact on health and well-being. Our Plant-Based Pittsburgh Pod has worked with local food pantries to aid populations especially hard-hit by COVID-19. We've donated food samples, recipes, information, and ingredients for inexpensive yet nourishing plant-based meals.”

Mark and Jennifer Ristine, Leaders of A New Choice Pod in Gilbert, shared “As we make plans to send our children back to school in September in the midst of the COVID Pandemic we have an opportunity to educate students and families about the health benefits of increasing plant-based whole food items in the diet. Many studies show a strong correlation between improved health and increased plant-based eating/decreased animal fats and proteins. This includes improved immune system function, a critical factor as we seek to suppress and prevent the spread of COVID-19 as well as provide lifelong health benefits. Through our Bean Bag Initiative, we distribute bags of dry beans to area food banks free of charge along with recipes and educational material to teach about the healthy alternatives to the processed foods typically donated to food banks. Beans are an inexpensive source of protein and fiber, and are a powerful aid to overall health including the immune system. This is critical as our state works toward getting back to normal in the midst of this pandemic”

Laura Favin, Coordinator of the Green Vitality Pod in Hatfield, said “It is important that we help Pennsylvanians deal with the pandemic with educational support in how to take care of one's immune system. There is a plethora of research that demonstrates that eating a whole food, plant-based diet is one of the most effective ways to stay healthy. We need to cut back on eating animal products. It is not good for our health, nor the planet's. It spreads disease and does not offer nearly the same amount of nutrition as eating plants.”

Brittany Jaroudi, Co-Group Leader of the Plant-Based Pittsburgh Pod, said “It is vital to the health of Pennsylvanians to promote a plant based lifestyle to help our immune system defend against COVID-19. Not only would you be encouraging our state to become healthier, but also helping Pennsylvania fight against current and future pandemics. We need to look at the science behind preventing and reversing lifestyle chronic disease - which points to promoting a whole food, plant-based diet. More vegetables, fruit, legumes, nuts and seeds will give our bodies the best chance at staying healthy and making our community healthier.”

Brigitte Blanco, founder of Philly Health Decision Forks Pod in Philadelphia, said “After 2 years of talking to high school and middle school children about the importance of eating plants I have so much feedback from students who say that they concentrate and learn better, perform better in tests, and are physically more able to excel in sports when they change their eating patterns.”

Karen Austro, Leader of the Pocono Plant-Based Pod in Stroudsburg, said “This pandemic is making it more obvious where vulnerabilities exist in our communities, and throughout the state. Socio-economic status, access to quality healthcare and nutrition all play a huge role in how COVID-19 impacts lives. We most certainly can't afford to ignore the role of the immune system in fighting this virus. There is no question that a healthy diet and lifestyle is the key to better outcomes. Until an effective vaccine is developed, our only true defense is our immunity, so it's more important than ever

to educate people on how to improve their health and strengthen their immune system through the power of a plant-rich diet. Eating less animal products also reduces our carbon footprint, and the overall health of the environment.

*The PlantPure Communities (PPC) Pod Network is the backbone of a global grassroots movement of people participating in independent local groups, called “Pods” who promote the evidence-based benefits of whole food, plant-based nutrition. To date, more than 250,000 people participate in the PPC Pod Network in 29 countries. PPC is a 501c3 nonprofit organization.