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COMMUNITIES, INC.

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## GROUP CALLS ON FIRST MINISTER TO FIGHT COVID VIA DATA-DRIVEN NUTRITION STRATEGY

Today, [a letter](#) was jointly released by the nonprofit PlantPure Communities (PPC) and Plant Pod Cymru which called on Mark Drakeford, First Minister of the Welsh Government, to implement a nutrition strategy to reduce hospitalizations, so that the economy can stay open even if the rate of infection grows. Plant Pod Cymru is an all-Wales social and support group that participates in the PlantPure Communities Pod Network.\*

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

- During press briefings, continue to speak about the **diet-related comorbidities** (degenerative diseases like diabetes, heart disease, obesity, hypertension) that increase COVID-19 hospitalization and fatality risk for people generally, and which disproportionately impact communities of colour and other minority or disadvantaged populations.
- 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.
- Publicly pledge to eat these foods for 10 days (we will support you with a Global 10-Day Jumpstart event!), thereby encouraging others to take these crucial first steps toward healing and doing their part to keep the economy open!

Mortality data shows that over 90% of the people who have died from COVID-19 suffered from pre-existing medical conditions, mostly arising from a lifetime of bad nutrition. 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."*

**Dr Sue Kenneally**, GP, bariatric physician and nutritionist working in South Wales commented *"Those of greatest risk of complications from COVID-19 have obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes. All of these can not only be prevented, but often reversed through a WFPB lifestyle. Results are typical and achievable with education and support. It's scientifically supported through peer-reviewed, unbiased research. Having extensively reviewed the scientific literature myself during my nutrition degree, I concluded that a WFPB diet is the best for health and the environment, and it is the diet that I personally follow."*

**Deborah Davies**, Co-Group Leader, Plant Pod Cymru shared *"COVID-19 has threatened not only the health but the livelihood of many people living in Wales. In promoting a whole food, plant based diet the Welsh Government would be empowering the people, as this lifestyle is protective against the comorbidities associated with the majority of fatalities. Its adoption could give hope to those who feel at risk and powerless against this devastating plague. Personally, I have experienced greater vitality, weight loss and improved health since adopting this lifestyle."*

**Angela Hill**, Co-Group Leader, Plant Pod Cymru commented *"Adopting a whole foods plant-based diet enabled me to reclaim my own health and happiness, and co-leading Plant Pod Cymru is my way to take the message of this wonderful, health-promoting, disease-beating lifestyle to as many people as possible. It is encouraging that the Welsh Government has expressed its commitment to alter the immensely worrying upward trajectory of the obesity epidemic in Wales that puts so many people at greater risk of enhanced suffering and death from COVID-19 and an array of chronic diseases, and I hope our leaders invest in promoting a whole foods, plant-based diet as an evidence-based solution for improving the health and wellbeing of the people in Wales."*

*\*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 a whole food, plant-based diet. To date, more than 250,000 people participate in the PlantPure Communities Pod Network in 31 countries.*

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