

# PhysiciansCommittee

for Responsible Medicine

PCRM.ORG

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Jean & Joseph Smith  
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Dear Mr. & Mrs. Smith,

I hope you've been well. I wanted to give you the latest here at the Physicians Committee. First, a piece of quick and fun news: Ellen DeGeneres just announced that she was celebrating her birthday by asking her viewers and fans to support our efforts, and brought star quarterback Drew Brees onto her show to make a very generous donation to our work right on the air. Needless to say, this led a great many people to our website to learn more.

In our work to reform animal testing, we just scored a big victory with the Environmental Protection Agency. The EPA had been planning tests that would have killed more than 100,000 animals to assess the endocrine-disrupting potential of about 10,000 chemicals. After years of negotiations and pressure by our Director of Toxicology Kristie Sullivan and her colleagues, we have convinced the EPA to use test-tube and computer methods instead. These methods are much faster, in addition to their obvious humane advantages. We have a lot more work ahead of us, but things are moving in the right direction.

Also, we are convening a series of roundtables here in Washington in which research experts discuss ways to reduce animal experiments on diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, and alcohol use disorders. The goal is to shift funding away from animal experimentation and toward more fruitful and ethical lines of research. This new effort has been made possible by the fact that we have several new scientists on our staff: Sarah Cavanaugh, PhD; Mei-Chun Lai, PhD; Charu Chandrasekera, PhD; and Francesca Pistolato, PhD. They are heading up these efforts. I'll keep you posted.

On the nutrition side of things, we rallied to stop a new federal "Beef Check-Off" program that would have aggressively funded beef promotion efforts. We worked with our allies on Capitol Hill, and the program was canceled, luckily. Speaking of Capitol Hill, the ranks of plant-based legislators are growing. Rep. Tulsi Gabbard and Rep. Kyrsten Sinema were recently joined by Rep. Ted Deutch and Sen. Cory Booker, with more to come.



We have published several exciting new research studies. Now, if research studies sound tedious or unimportant, I should perhaps mention why we do them. Americans eat more than one million animals per hour, and the health consequences are enormous, in addition to the humane and environmental issues, needless to say. Our research studies help prove the value of plant-based diets, build the evidence policymakers need as they set federal food policies, and often spark news stories for the general public. They have also been the basis for three recent PBS specials.

Over the past year, we have published three crucial new meta-analyses: the first, published in *JAMA Internal Medicine*, proved the power of plant-based diets for reducing blood pressure. The second showed the effect of plant-based diets on diabetes. The latest one, published in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, showed that plant-based diets consistently cause healthful weight loss.

As these studies are published, we not only publicize their findings to scientific and lay audiences. We also send them to the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, which is revising the Dietary Guidelines for Americans as we speak. And, based on the evidence it had received, the Committee decided *not* to recommend lean meat in its recommendations. Here was the headline in a Midwest farm magazine: "Meat Institute is Stunned by Dietary Guidelines Committee Dropping Lean Meat from Healthy Diet."

These studies are expensive and challenging, but each one strengthens the foundation that convinces doctors and government officials about the value of plant-based diets.

We also recently launched a series of plant-based programs in Little Rock, Arkansas, as a test to see what would happen if we worked with hospitals, schools, businesses, and the media simultaneously, and we asked the local movie theater to screen *Forks over Knives*. The result was a huge splash, with the whole community being introduced to a healthy and humane way of eating. We are now planning a series of these programs in other cities across the U.S. Here in Washington, D.C., we are launching a pilot with the DC Public Schools to offer a vegan entrée daily for students in kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade from February through May.

To remedy the lack of nutrition in medical practice, we are building a nutrition curriculum for medical students, in partnership with the University of North Carolina. The result will be prepared lectures and interactive modules on four topics: diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and weight management. They are built at UNC, but then made available to medical schools everywhere.



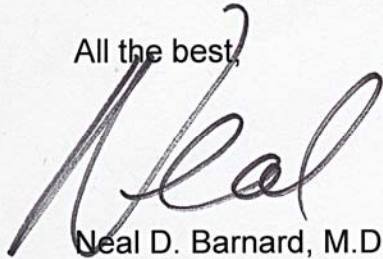
Our new medical center is being built as we speak. Located next to our offices in Washington, D.C., it will offer primary care services, with a special focus on conditions for which nutrition plays a key role. Its key function, though, is to serve as a place where young doctors can get involved in our research and advocacy work. It will open in November. We will also offer our members a chance to support the clinic, including a series of naming opportunities.

Our *International Conference on Nutrition in Medicine: Cardiovascular Disease* will take place in Washington, D.C., July 31 and August 1. It will offer an in-depth look at the roots of heart disease in early life, how a plant-based diet can help prevent and reverse heart disease, and lots of practical tips for health care providers. We are expecting a huge crowd of doctors, nurses, dietitians, and other professionals, and for many it will be a life-changing experience.

So that's about it for now. Much more to come. If you find yourself in our neck of the woods, please come by for a visit and say hi to our staff—they would love to share the latest developments with you.

Thanks for all your help and support!!

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neal', written in a cursive style.

Neal D. Barnard, M.D.