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**MAYOR ADAMS, NYC H+H CEO KATZ ANNOUNCE SUCCESSFUL ROLLOUT
AND EXPANSION OF PLANT-BASED MEALS AS DEFAULT OPTION FOR
PATIENTS IN NYC PUBLIC HOSPITALS**

*NYC Health + Hospitals/Lincoln, Metropolitan, and Woodhull Now Serving
Healthier and More Sustainable Dinners*

New Initiative Builds on Plant-Based Lunch Program With 95 Percent Satisfaction Rate

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Eric Adams and New York City Health + Hospitals (H+H) CEO Dr. Mitchell H. Katz today announced that culturally diverse plant-based meals are now the primary dinner options for inpatients at H+H/Lincoln, Metropolitan, and Woodhull Hospitals. The dinner program expands on the health care system’s successful plant-based lunch default program — launched in March of this year — which now boasts a 95 percent satisfaction rate.

“When it comes to preventing diet-related chronic disease, there is a growing recognition that it’s not our DNA — it’s our dinner,” said **Mayor Adams**. “Since January, we have introduced Plant-Powered Fridays into schools, introduced fresh produce into the nation’s only municipal emergency food system, and expanded Plant-Based Lifestyle Medicine Clinics to public hospitals across all five boroughs. Now, we are proud to announce the successful rollout and expansion of default plant-based lunch and dinner options at all H+H sites. This transformative program is already changing lives, empowering patients to take control of their own health and further cementing New York City as a leader in preventive medicine.”

“In the event we or a loved one has to be in the hospital, we should know that the food served will be comforting, tasty, and health promoting,” said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Anne Williams-Isom**. “Expanding plant-based offerings helps us do just that. Thank you to our food service partners and patient navigators for making this initiative both delicious and successful.”

“As a primary care physician, I speak with all of my patients about the importance of a healthy diet and how it can help fend off or treat chronic conditions like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease,” said **NYC Health + Hospitals President and CEO Mitchell Katz**,

MD. “Our new meal program is rooted in evidence for health benefits and environmental sustainability, and expands on the success of our Meatless Mondays Program.”



NYC H+H Plant Based Dish: Southern Black-eye Pea Casserole with Plant Based Corn Bread topped with Plant Based Shredded Cheese

Each year, H+H serves about 3 million meals for lunch and dinner. About half of all inpatients are eligible for plant-based dishes, and 60 percent have chosen them since the plant-based default program was launched — contributing to approximately 864,000 plant-based meals per year being served. It also builds on the Meatless Mondays initiative — launched in 2019 — in collaboration with then-Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams.

Patients considered high-risk, those who are prescribed a special diet, or given a referral can meet with one of more than 100 registered H+H dietitians to learn more about the benefits of a plant-based diet. There are 14 new plant-based options with a selection offered each day. The meals are inspired by the flavors of Latin, Asian, and other cuisines that represent the health system’s diverse patient population. Thai noodle bowls, Spanish vegetable paella with yellow rice, and a Southern black-eyed pea casserole are just some of the new, “chef’s choice” options being offered to patients at these three sites. Food Service Associates work with patients on meal choice and selection from the beginning of their stay until they are discharged, and encourage them to choose healthy meals as part of their healing and recovery plan of care.

“Food is medicine, especially in our moments of sickness. Nutritious, healthy food should be available wherever New Yorkers are, but especially in institutions that are meant to restore health,” said **New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Commissioner Dr.**

Ashwin Vasan. “It starts with us, and we must lead by example, so this is an important step forward. Congratulations to Health + Hospitals for making nutritious and delicious plant-based foods the default option for patients who are there to heal and to return to health.”

“These new recipes have been taste-tested and approved by many of our patients and staff, and we’re excited for everyone to try them,” said **Dr. Michelle McMacken, executive director, Office of Nutrition and Lifestyle Medicine, NYC Health + Hospitals.** “The new meals are delicious, nutritious, and rooted in communities across New York City, from sancocho to pad thai to falafel.”

“As a registered dietitian I am grateful that plant-based foods are being recognized as essential for the health of New Yorkers and our patients,” said **Mercedes Redwood, MS, RD, assistant vice president for management services, NYC Health + Hospitals.** “We have worked closely with our chefs and clinical dietitians to produce a menu that is culturally appropriate, tasty, and sure to enhance our patients dining experience.”

“Across the city, we are striving to make the healthy choice the easier choice,” said **Kate MacKenzie, executive director, Mayor's Office of Food Policy.** “As we continue to broaden the administration's goal of ensuring access to delicious and nutritious meals for all New Yorkers, the implementation and expansion of this program highlight how city facilities can lead on encouraging healthy lifestyle changes.”

Non-plant-based options continue to be available and are offered in accordance with a patient’s prescribed diet.

Plant-based nutrition is a style of cooking and eating that emphasizes, but is not necessarily limited to, fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds, plant oils, and herbs and spices, and reflects evidence-based principles of health and sustainability. Scientific research has shown that plant-based eating patterns are linked to significantly lower risk of cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes, obesity, and certain cancers. They can also be effective for weight management, as well as treatment of certain chronic diseases, including Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and hyperlipidemia.

H+H plans to offer plant-based dinner options at all hospitals this fall, and, by year’s end, plans to offer plant-based supplements and tube feeds. The system plans to introduce the plant-based menu options to post-acute care facilities by January.

“The health and well-being of all New Yorkers was strengthened today by the mayor’s announcement of plant-based meals in NYC hospitals, said **New York City Councilmember Lynn Schulman, chair, Committee on Health.** “As someone who has dedicated my personal and professional life to healthcare advocacy, it is wonderful to see the rollout and expansion of a program to make New Yorkers healthier, especially those who find themselves as patients in our city’s public hospital system.”

“New Yorkers receiving care at our H + H hospitals deserve not only top-notch medical care but access to nutritious food that tastes great, too,” said **New York City Councilmember Justin Brannan**. “Being in a hospital is hard enough, and the mealtime shouldn’t make it harder. As a vegetarian myself, I’m thrilled that H + H system will be providing culturally sensitive and plant-based meals to their patients around the city. Let’s hope this starts a new trend across the nation.”

“The food on our plate has an impact on our health, and research shows that plant-based diets improve wellbeing,” said **New York City Councilmember Gale A. Brewer**. “I applaud Mayor Adams for his continued efforts to get New Yorkers to think more critically about their meals, and for expanding food options in schools and hospitals.”

“I thank Mayor Eric Adams and his administration for working together with NYC Health + Hospitals President & CEO Dr. Katz for the successful implementation of plant-based meal options for NYC hospitals,” said **New York City Councilmember Oswald Feliz**. “Health and wellness are essential components for the success of our constituents and their families. Providing plant-based meal options will aid in the fight against chronic diseases that has impacted residents in my community as well as help in preventing the onset of new diseases. I believe that a great way to tackle chronic conditions such as Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease is by combining healthy food options and following the treatment plan of the healthcare provider. Care that incorporates plant-based food options that is not only nutritious, but also delicious will ensure that New Yorkers live longer and healthier lives.”

“All New Yorkers deserve access to healthy, nutritious foods,” said **New York City Councilmember Sandy Nurse**. “The initiative by Mayor Adams and NYC H+H to expand plant-based meals at our public hospitals is a great way to encourage inpatients to adopt healthy eating habits and improve sustainability in our city's food systems. We should expand plant-based meal options across public agencies and integrate plant-based meals as a direct diabetes prevention and management strategy everywhere we can.”

“It is no secret that Bronx county has struggled to break a vicious cycle that has earned the borough the title of being New York’s unhealthiest county,” said **New York City Councilmember Rafael Salamanca, Jr.** “Poor diets caused by limited access to healthy foods has led many Bronxites to suffer from severe health issues such as obesity, high blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease. As the Adams’ administration works to create and expand healthier food habits and options in the city, I am thrilled NYC Health + Hospitals’ wildly successful plant-based menu at Lincoln Hospital, one of three city hospitals chosen to participate in the plant-based food pilot program, has paved the way for a city-wide rollout. Beyond the obvious health indicators, today’s announcement shows that Bronxites are resoundingly choosing a healthier lifestyle.”

“This is an important step towards food justice and allowing people options. Everyone deserves to have choice in what they put in their body and the decisions they make about their health,” said **New York City Councilmember Althea Stevens**.

“Diversity in our hospital dietary menus is extremely important, especially for patients with varying needs,” said **New York City Councilmember Marjorie Velazquez**. “Implementing a plant-based option addresses these health concerns and offers families a chance not to worry

about finding suitable meal options for their loved ones. For others, this is a lifestyle they choose as they work towards having a healthier diet that meets their health goals. I am excited to see communities across the city have access to options that meet their dietary needs and reflect the many cultures of New York City.”

“The American Heart Association recommends that people consume healthy sources of protein derived mostly from plants (legumes and nuts), eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, and choose foods made mostly with whole grains rather than refined grains,” said **Rafael Ortiz, M.D., president, American Heart Association Board of Directors in New York City and chief, Neuro-Endovascular Surgery, Lenox Hill Hospital**. “These guidelines, while not exclusive to a plant-based diet, clearly illustrate the importance of plant foods to promoting good health.”

“A healthy diet plays an important role in maintaining good health. NYC Health + Hospitals' transition to plant-based meals demonstrates that the country's largest public health system is also an innovative leader when it comes to promoting public health and improving patient outcomes,” said **New York State Nurses Association First Vice President Judith Cutchin, DNP, RN**.

“Good health starts with good nutrition,” said **Michael Davoli, senior government relations director, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN)**. “Research has shown that poor diet and not being active are key factors that can increase a person’s cancer risk. We are pleased that Mayor Adams and NYC Health + Hospitals are continuing to promote healthy eating and to remove the barriers that are preventing many New Yorkers from living a healthy lifestyle.”

“Increasing the number of healthy plant-based options that patients and staff have to choose from is a clear win-win. Providing culturally diverse options can help patients experience ‘food as medicine’ firsthand and inspire healthy eating habits to take back home to their families,” said **Dr. Catherine Collings, president, The American College of Lifestyle Medicine**.

“The American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) applauds NYC Health + Hospitals for offering healthful, plant-based meal options to patients in the hospital,” said **Sheena Patel, director of nutrition programs, American Institute for Cancer Research**. “Diets that put nutrient-rich plant foods first like vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, nuts and seeds are one of AICR’s core recommendations to reduce cancer risk and for healthy survivorship. Plant foods provide a variety of vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytochemicals that are known to be cancer protective. We support NYC Health + Hospitals’ efforts to make plant-based foods the star of the plate.”

“NYC Registered Dietitian Nutritionists, and RDNs all across the country, are ecstatic to see plant-based meal options at NYC Health + Hospitals. The hospital setting is the perfect place to offer a healthful, plant-centric eating plan and inspire patients to enjoy foods that nourish and promote health. The diverse flavor offerings will especially encourage inpatients on special diets to meet their needs,” said **Theresa Gentile, MS, RDN, CDN, New York City media spokesperson, New York State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics**.

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