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NEWS RELEASE

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PCRM Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine

Proposed Dietary Guidelines Highlight Benefits of Vegetarian Diets

WASHINGTON—The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine today praised the findings of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, which highlighted the value of vegetarian diets for Americans. Although vegetarian diets have been thought of as a fad, they are clearly established as a powerful way to prevent obesity, diabetes, and cholesterol problems.

Previous advisory panels have noted the value of vegetarian diets, but they have never been officially recommended in final guidelines, which are often altered by political forces. The current language is the strongest to date—it notes that vegetarian diets are associated with a lower body mass index, lower blood pressure, and improved health outcomes.

People who avoid meat products have much lower risk of health problems, and those who also avoid dairy products and eggs (following a vegan diet) are healthiest of all. For example, vegetarian and vegan diets reduce the risk of diabetes, and healthy plant-based diets also can help people who already have type 2 diabetes manage the disease and reduce the need for medications.

"Vegetarian diets can dramatically cut the risk of obesity, diabetes, and other problems," says Susan Levin, M.S., R.D., director of nutrition education for PCRM. "America now spends more than \$100 billion a year on obesity-related health care costs, and it's clear that meatless meals can help us stay trimmer and healthier and cut our medical bills."

PCRM's own nutrition recommendations, represented graphically in The Power Plate (www.ThePowerPlate.org), focus on presenting whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and legumes as dietary staples. The Power Plate rests on dozens of scientific studies showing that plant-based eating habits are associated with lower obesity rates and a reduced risk of heart disease, hypertension, and type 2 diabetes.

For more information or an interview with a PCRM dietitian or physician, contact Vaishali Honawar at 202-527-7339 or vhonawar@pcrm.org.

Founded in 1985, the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine is a nonprofit health organization that promotes preventive medicine, conducts clinical research, and encourages higher standards for ethics and effectiveness in research.

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