

House Committee on Human Services
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Williams, Vice-Chair Leif, Vice-Chair Ruiz, and Members of the Committee:

As a physician, and an Oregonian from Portland, **I strongly support Oregon House Bill 2348.** Having the option to select a plant-based meal in hospitals, long-term care facilities, and in prisons is an important step to better health for patients and their families.

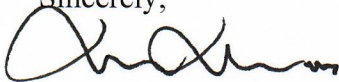
I spend a great deal of time counseling patients on how to reduce their risk of heart disease, type II diabetes, and other chronic diseases brought on by poor diet. Sadly, they are often surrounded by unhealthy food options at home and in their communities. But it is shocking that while in our care, in hospitals, nursing facilities or prisons, they are often provided with equally poor dietary choices. The lack of healthy plant-based meals high in fiber and low in saturated fats seriously undermines our efforts to educate patients on the importance of diet in prevention of chronic disease. HB 2348 could contribute significantly to better health outcomes for fellow Oregonians.

A growing body of evidence shows that eating more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes and fewer animal products and processed foods can help fight chronic disease. A 2019 meta-analysis of nine studies published in *JAMA Internal Medicine* found that greater adherence to a plant-based dietary pattern was linked to a lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Similarly, plant-based diets are linked to a lower risk of cardiovascular disease incidence and mortality, as well as all-cause mortality. Further, the largest body of nutrition professionals, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics confirms that well-planned vegetarian and vegan diets are healthful and may provide benefits in preventing and treating certain conditions, like obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

As a physician, I was pleased that the American Medical Association took a stand on this issue in 2017, when they developed new hospital food guidelines, aiming to engage hospitals in efforts for better nutrition to fight cancer and cardiovascular disease. Those AMA guidelines call for offering plant-based options daily, among other healthful measures, to help patients get on a healthier path. The American College of Cardiology adopted similar guidelines. These guidelines are equally applicable to the prison setting. The next step is to implement them. HB 2348 is a simple, straightforward, and affordable measure that will mean that every hospital patient, family member, and employee, and every inmate in prison will have access to healthful plant-based foods, and that these institutions will be stronger allies for a healthful recovery.

In closing, thank you for giving us the opportunity to have this important conversation. **I strongly urge your support of HB 2348.**

Sincerely,



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