

# HARNESSING THE POWER OF PLANT BASED NUTRITION

Overcoming Obstacles to Plant-Based Health  
in Brooklyn and Beyond



Friday, March 29, 2019  
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
ALUMNI AUDITORIUM  
SUNY Downstate Medical Center  
395 Lenox Road  
Brooklyn, NY 11203

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# W E L C O M E

Welcome to SUNY Downstate's first annual conference on plant-based nutrition. We are gathered here today to share some amazing news - that eating more whole plant foods can have a profoundly positive influence on health. Plant-based nutrition – emphasizing consumption of vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, legumes, and fruits – can prevent, treat, or even reverse certain chronic diseases in adults. Plant-based diets have specifically been shown to have favorable effects in the prevention and treatment of obesity, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, coronary artery disease and hyperlipidemia - all conditions that are epidemic in our community.

This conference was envisioned and organized by members of the SUNY Downstate Committee on Plant-based Health and Nutrition, whose mission is to promote awareness of the health benefits of plant-based nutrition and discuss ways to integrate plant-based health into resident training, medical student education, and the overall culture at SUNY Downstate Medical Center. The Committee is a unique, multidisciplinary collaboration between the SUNY Downstate College of Medicine, SUNY Downstate School of Public Health, and the Office of the Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams. Please visit [www.downstate.edu/plant-based](http://www.downstate.edu/plant-based) to learn more about the Committee and free evidence-based resources.

In today's conference, we'll review the evidence for plant-based nutrition, and we'll have in-depth discussions about strategies that individuals can use to improve the quality of their diets, as well as what institutions can do to foster health-promoting, plant-based nutrition for all.

We hope that these presentations and discussions will inspire you to make changes in your own lives and organizations and to go forth and help your patients, clients, friends and family to do the same.

Sincerely,

Richard M. Rosenfeld, MD, MPH, MBA  
Elizabeth P. Helzner, PhD, MS  
Conference Co-Chairs



**SUNY Downstate Committee on**  
**Plant-Based Health & Nutrition**  
*More Plants, Less Meat, Better Health*

# CONFERENCE PROGRAM

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**9:00-10:00 REGISTRATION AND BREAKFAST**

Alumni Auditorium Atrium

**10:00-12:00 MORNING SESSION**

Alumni Auditorium

- 10:00 WELCOME Elizabeth Helzner, PhD
- 10:10 SUNY DOWNSTATE PRESIDENT WAYNE J. RILEY, MD, MPH, MBA, MACP
- 10:20 BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT ERIC L. ADAMS  
*Personal Experience with a Plant-Based Diet and Advocacy for Plant-Based Nutrition*
- 10:50 KEYNOTE SPEAKER: DAVID L. KATZ, MD  
*Truth About Food*
- 11:40 RICHARD M. ROSENFELD, MD, MPH, MBA  
*SUNY Downstate Position Statement on Plant-Based Health and Nutrition*

**12:00-1:00 NETWORKING and PLANT-BASED LUNCH**

Public Health Academic Building Hall

**1:00-4:00 AFTERNOON SESSION**

Alumni Auditorium

- 1:00 ROBERT OSTFELD, MD, MSc, FACC  
*Confessions of a Reformed Cardiologist. A Plant-Based Diet for Your Heart?*
- 1:50 COFFEE BREAK
- 2:10 DANIEL ROSENFELD, BS  
*You Are What You (Don't) Eat: The Psychology of Plant-Based Nutrition*
- 2:25 PANEL 1: OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO DIETARY CHANGE  
Omwale Adewale, Diego Ponienman, MD, Mereliz Ortiz  
Moderator: Richard Rosenfeld, MD, MPH, MBA
- 3:10 PANEL 2: OVERCOMING INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION  
Lianna Levine-Reisner, Ruth Stanislaus  
Moderator: Rachel Atcheson
- 3:55 CLOSING REMARKS Richard M. Rosenfeld, MD, MPH, MBA

# PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Plant-based nutrition – emphasizing consumption of vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, legumes, and fruits – can prevent, treat, or reverse certain chronic diseases in adults based on current best research evidence. Plant-based diets have been shown to have favorable effects in the prevention and treatment of obesity, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, coronary artery disease and hyperlipidemia.

Given the extremely high prevalence and cost of diet-related disease in the US, it is surprising that very little training in nutrition and nutrition counseling is provided to medical practitioners. US medical students currently receive an average of only 19.6 hours of nutrition education over the course of their training. Despite an abundance of scientific evidence supporting whole-food, plant-based nutrition as a safe, relatively inexpensive intervention with no negative side effects, many clinicians are completely unaware of its effectiveness in the prevention and treatment of chronic disease. Without adequate knowledge of the scientific evidence, physicians and healthcare practitioners are unequipped to enthusiastically promote this dietary approach to their patients and clients. Other knowledge gaps exist regarding approaches to maximize plant-based food consumption. These gaps exist both at the individual patient-counseling level and at the institutional (hospital, school, governmental) level. Information from expert presenters will cover scientific evidence supporting plant-based nutrition and strategies for overcoming barriers to dietary change.

This conference will share expert views on the scientific evidence supporting plant-based nutrition, and strategies for helping transition to greater dietary plant consumption on the individual and institutional levels.

## Target Audience

This educational activity is designed to improve knowledge about the utility of whole-food, plant-based nutrition in the prevention and treatment of chronic disease.

The intended audience is individuals in a position to influence awareness, understanding, and implementation of plant-based initiatives in Brooklyn and beyond. More specifically, this includes clinicians (MDs, RNs, NPs, PAs, RDs), public health professionals, resident physicians in training, medical and public health students, and community leaders who are involved with, or have an interest in, plant-based health and nutrition. Consumers and others are welcome to attend.

## Objectives

After attending this educational program, the participants will be able to:

- identify 1-2 areas examples of scientific evidence on the benefits of plant-based nutrition with regard to preventing and treating chronic disease.
- identify 1-2 strategies for overcoming obstacles to dietary change, such as food access, preparation, and cultural adaptation of new foods.
- identify 1-2 appropriate resources that clinicians can use to inform and inspire their patients and clients to adopt a whole food, plant-based dietary lifestyle.



# ACCREDITATION & DESIGNATION STATEMENTS

The State University of New York (SUNY) Downstate Medical Center is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

The SUNY Downstate Medical Center designates this live activity for a maximum of 4.75 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)™*. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

**Nursing:** This continuing nursing education activity was approved by the Northeast Multistate Division, an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.

**Dietitians:** CDR Credentialed Practitioners will receive 4.0 Continuing Professional Education units (CPEUs) for completion of this activity.

**Physician Assistants:** AAPA accepts category 1 credit from AOACCME, Prescribed credit from AAFP, and AMA category 1 credit for the PRA for organizations accredited by the ACCME.

**Social Workers:** SUNY Downstate Medical Center is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Social Work as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed social workers #SW-0469.

## DISCLOSURES

SUNY Downstate Medical Center Office of CME (OCME) and its affiliates are committed to providing educational activities that are objective, balanced and as free of bias as possible. The OCME has established policies that will identify and resolve all conflicts of interest prior to this educational activity. All participating faculty are expected to disclose to the audience, verbally or in writing, any commercial relationships that might be perceived as a real or apparent conflict of interest related to the content of their presentations, and unlabeled/unapproved uses of drugs and devices. Detailed disclosures are made verbally and/or in writing during the program.

The following faculty have no disclosures and will not discuss an off-label drug/device:

Eric L. Adams • Lianna Levine Reisner • Omowale Adewale • Daniel L. Rosenfeld • Merelis Catalina-Ortiz • Ruth Stanislaus

The following faculty have disclosures and will not discuss an off-label drug/device:

David L. Katz, MD, MPH, FACPM, FACP, FACLM - Employment: Chief Science Officer for Better Therapeutics, Inc  
Robert J. Otsfeld, MD, MSc, FACC - Consultant: Better Therapeutics, Inc.

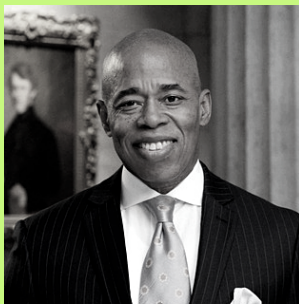
All members of the conference planning committee have no disclosures:

Michelle Pink, FNP, ANCC-BC, CNS, MSN, BSN, CCRN • Richard Rosenfeld, MD, MPH, MBA  
Elizabeth Helzner, PhD, MS • Joanne S. Katz, PT, DPT, PhD • Megan Hall, ScD, MS  
Pamela Straker, PhD • Rachel Atcheson • Mariana Markell, MD • Jacqueline Brockman, RD, CDN, CLT  
Edeline Mitton, MEd

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



**David L. Katz, MD, MPH, FACPM, FACP, FACLM** is the founding director (1998) of Yale University's Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center, Past-President of the American College of Lifestyle Medicine, and Founder/President of the True Health Initiative. Katz earned his BA degree from Dartmouth College (1984); his MD from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine (1988); and his MPH from the Yale University School of Public Health (1993). The recipient of many awards for his contributions to public health, he has received three honorary doctorates. He holds 5 US patents, with others pending. He invented the research method known as "evidence mapping;" is the principal inventor of the Overall Nutritional Quality Index (ONQI™) algorithm; and invented the dietary intake assessment method called Diet Quality Photo Navigation (<https://www.dqpn.io/>). In 2018, Katz was selected as the new Chair for the annual Art & Science of Health Promotion conference. He has authored roughly 200 peer-reviewed publications, many hundreds of health columns both on-line and in print, and 16 books to date including leading textbooks in both nutrition and preventive medicine. His most recent book is *The Truth about Food*, with all proceeds going to support the True Health Initiative. Katz is recognized globally for expertise in nutrition, weight management and the prevention of chronic disease. He has served as one of the expert judges for the annual rankings of diets by US News & World Report for much of the past decade. He reaches a social media following of nearly one million.



**Eric L. Adams** For the past three decades, Eric L. Adams has served the residents of Brooklyn as borough president, state senator, police officer, and coalition builder. In November of 2017, he was reelected for a second term to represent all of Brooklyn as borough president. Born in Brownsville and educated in the City's public school system, Eric is committed to ensuring Brooklyn's bright future by helping each and every Brooklynite reach his or her full potential. Eric has worked to make the popularity of Brooklyn's brand translate into prosperity for the over 2.6 million Brooklynites that call the borough home. He is a big believer in the power of connections, of bringing together people in need of services with resources that have long existed but have been underutilized. As a legislator, Eric's record in the New York State Senate was one that underscored his strong commitment to the rights of those from every walk of life, including protecting the right to privacy, supporting marriage equality, defending a woman's right to choose, as well as fighting for students' rights, workers' rights, and animal rights. His work involved efforts to prevent racial profiling, gender discrimination, domestic violence, and elder abuse.

## INVITED FACULTY



**Robert J. Ostfeld, MD, MSc, FACC**, a cardiologist, is the Director of Preventive Cardiology, the founder and director of the Cardiac Wellness Program at Montefiore Health System, and an Associate Professor of Medicine at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Dr. Ostfeld earned his BA from the University of Pennsylvania, graduating Summa Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa; his MD from Yale University School of Medicine; and his Masters of Science in Epidemiology from the Harvard School of Public Health. Dr. Ostfeld completed his medical internship and residency at the Massachusetts General Hospital and his cardiology fellowship and research fellowship in Preventive Medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital - both teaching hospitals of Harvard Medical School. His professional interests include cardiovascular disease prevention, medical education and clinical research. He speaks widely regarding nutrition and prevention. He earned the Outstanding Full Time Attending of the Year award at Montefiore for excellence in teaching medical residents; the Program Director's Award for dedicated service on behalf of the Montefiore-Einstein Cardiology Fellowship; and was elected to the Leo M. Davidoff Society at Einstein for outstanding achievement in the teaching of medical students.



**Daniel Rosenfeld** is a Ph.D. student in Health Psychology at UCLA and conducts research on the psychology of vegetarianism and meat consumption. In particular, his research explores what motivates people to go vegetarian, how being a vegetarian shapes one's sense of identity, and how people think about the morality of eating meat. Daniel holds a B.S. in Human Development from Cornell University.



**Omowale Adewale** is the author of *An Introduction to Veganism and Agricultural Globalism*, former champion fighter, and MaRLI research scholar certified in plant-based nutrition. He is currently in production of *Brotha Vegan* for Lantern Books, a collection of insightful essays, stories and other writings by Black vegan men. Wale is the co-founder and director of G.A.ME, Inc. a not-for-profit that addresses socio-economic issues among working class people of color. He is the founder of Black VegFest. Wale was born at SUNY Downstate Medical Center. He has three children (17,11, 9) and mentors many more.



**Diego Ponieman, MD, MPH** is the chief medical officer at SOMOS Community Care. Dr. Ponieman was born and raised in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he completed medical school at the University of Buenos Aires. He completed his Internship and Residency at Albert Einstein/Montefiore Medical Center in New York City. He later completed an Academic Fellowship in General Internal medicine at Mount Sinai School of Medicine where he still remains as a faculty member. He also sees patients as a Primary Care Physician at his private practice Metropolis Medical in upper Manhattan. Dr. Ponieman uses nutrition and lifestyle changes as a strong therapeutic intervention. He is working with SOMOS Community Care and underserved communities through local clinics in order to bring a food oasis with the hope to transform these food deserts into healthier neighborhoods.



**Merelis Ortiz** is a Community Chef, organizer, and the Community Food Education + Enterprise Manager at Just Foods. In her work, she centers racial equity and food sovereignty through a decolonizing your diet, solidarity and cooperative economy lens. Merelis has been committed to food sovereignty for most of her professional career. As a CoFED Racial Justice Fellow in the summer of 2018, she launched PAS - People y Alimentos Solidarity program a bilingual and multigenerational offering that focuses on building solidarity among Black, Indigenous, and Latinx- heritage people through land and food at Kelly Street Garden in the Bronx. She was previously a worker-owner at Woke Foods, a cooperatively owned plant-based Dominican food business and is alumni of Soul Fire Farm's Black and Latinx Farmers Immersion program. Merelis currently works with her parents on ways they can incorporate more plant-based dishes to their Dominican restaurant, Mamá Catalina that is based in Queens named after her paternal grandmother. She holds a B.A. in International Studies from the City College of New York. Merelis is a native New Yorker with roots in the Dominican Republic.



**Ruth Stanislaus** is the founding principal of PS 971 School of Math, Science and Healthy Living since 2010 located in district 20, the Bay Ridge Brooklyn NY. In her 28th year in education, Ruth leads a community of K-5 Asian and Spanish speaking students. Ruth graduated from Parsons School of Design with a BFA and Bank Street College of Education with a M. Ed. Ruth also holds a certificate in Culinary Arts. Ruth is principal to many, mom to five, grandma to four and wife of one and is dedicated to building academically, socially and physically healthy students.





**Lianna Levine Reisner, MSOD**, is the Network Director of Plant Powered Metro New York, which is catalyzing the local movement for vibrant health through whole food, plant-based nutrition. Recently, she has worked as a consultant and coach to nonprofit organizations and philanthropies, especially within the Jewish community, and as an active board officer. Lianna was the development director for a dynamic organization in Maryland, where she trained with innovative network organizers to seed communal change across lines of diversity. Lianna holds a Master's degree from Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management, and a certificate in Plant-Based Nutrition from the Center for Nutrition Studies/eCornell. She lives in the Upper West Side of Manhattan with her husband and three children.

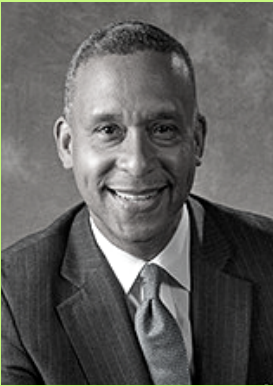


**Rachel Atcheson** started as an intern with The Humane League and was promoted three times in three years to become Senior Campus Outreach Director. Rachel founded The Humane League's campus outreach program and was responsible for its growth from 18 campuses to 52 campuses. Rachel then moved on to work in the New York City Mayor's Office as the Animal Welfare Liaison, also the only position of its kind in the country. She is currently Deputy Strategist for Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, working on plant-based nutrition initiatives such as launching Bellevue Hospital's Plant-Based Lifestyle Medicine Program and expanding the resources available to Brooklyn residents who might benefit from access to information around plant-based nutrition. She is an At-Large Director of the SUNY Downstate Committee on Plant-Based Health and Nutrition.

## DOWNSTATE FACULTY



**Elizabeth P. Helzner, PhD, MS** is an Associate Professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at SUNY Downstate's School of Public Health. She has specialized training in the epidemiology of aging and in neuroepidemiology, and her research has focused on the population-based study of chronic diseases including Alzheimer's disease, hearing loss and diabetes. Dr. Helzner has first-hand experience with the health benefits of plant-based nutrition. She is interested in expanding nutrition education for the healthcare workforce, and in the development of community-based approaches to increase access to plant-based nutrition for chronic disease prevention and treatment. She is the Vice-Chair of the SUNY Downstate Committee on Plant-Based Health and Nutrition.



**Wayne J. Riley, M.D., MPH, MBA, MACP**, was appointed President by The State University of New York (SUNY) Board of Trustees as the 17th president of the State University of New York Health Science Center at Brooklyn Downstate Medical Center in January of 2017. Before Dr. Riley's appointment at Downstate, he served as clinical professor of Medicine and adjunct professor of Health Policy at the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine. Prior to Vanderbilt, Dr. Riley served as the 10th president, chief executive officer, and professor of Medicine at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee.

Dr. Riley is an academic primary care general internist with more than 25 years of progressive senior executive level management, policy, and leadership experiences in academic medicine, patient care, research administration, academic health center administration, health care management, health policy, biotechnology, the corporate sector, government service, advocacy, and organized medicine.

Dr. Riley earned his Doctor of Medicine degree from the Morehouse School of Medicine, a Bachelor of Arts degree in anthropology with a concentration in Medical Anthropology from Yale University, and a Master of Public Health degree in health systems management from the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. He also earned a Master's in Business Administration from Rice University's Jesse H. Jones Graduate School of Business

A Brooklyn resident, Dr. Riley currently serves on the boards of the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, the YMCA of Greater New York, and the Arnold P. Gold Foundation.



**Richard M. Rosenfeld, MD, MPH, MBA** is Distinguished Professor and Chairman of Otolaryngology at SUNY Downstate Medical Center, where he is also Program Director for Residency Training and President of the Medical and Dental Staff. Dr. Rosenfeld coordinates the development of Clinical Practice Guidelines and Quality Measures the American Academy of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery and founded the Guidelines International Network North American Community. He has authored more than 300 scientific publications and given about 1,000 lectures worldwide. Dr. Rosenfeld follows a whole-food, plant-based diet and incorporates regular fitness and resistance training into his daily routine. He is the Founder and Chair of the SUNY Downstate Committee on Plant-based Health and Nutrition and the Vice Chair of the SUNY Distinguished Academy.

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# THANK YOU

We gratefully acknowledge our supporters,  
without whom this event would not be possible:

- **SUNY Downstate Medical Executive Committee** for generous financial contributions
- **Office of the Downstate President, Wayne J. Riley** for generous financial contributions
- **SUNY Downstate School of Public Health** for generous financial contributions
- **Office of the Brooklyn Borough President, Eric L. Adams** for logistical support
- **Richard M. Rosenfeld** for generous funds to facilitate medical student participation



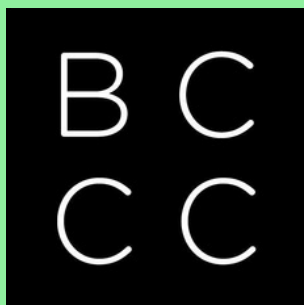
Gotham Greens provided produce used in preparing today's lunch.



We thank Plant Based World for exhibiting with us today. The Plant Based World Conference and Expo will take place June 7-8, 2019 at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in New York City.  
For more information: <http://www.plantbasedworldexpo.com>

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## ABOUT TODAY'S FOOD



The food for today's conference was catered by Brownsville Community Culinary Center (BCCC). The BCCC is a nonprofit organization that operates a culinary training program and participant-operated cafe, bakery, and catering service in Brownsville, Brooklyn. Program participants train in real-time under seasoned industry professionals and go on to work in NYC's top kitchens. Today's plant-based menu is made up of dishes inspired by the cuisine of the African diaspora. For more information about BCCC's programs, visit [www.meltingpotfoundationusa.org](http://www.meltingpotfoundationusa.org)

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## INTERNET

Wireless internet access is complimentary. There is no password. Choose DMC-guest, then join network. Accept policy to connect.

## NETWORKING

We provide open tables during breakfast and lunch. We encourage you to build connections, enjoy dialogue with your colleagues, and make new friends. Food and beverages are not permitted in the auditorium.

## LUNCH

Lunch will be held in the Public Health Academic Building Hall. Conference staff will direct you after the morning session.

## LAVATORY

Women's and Men's lavatories are situated on each side of the auditorium.

## AFTER THE MEETING:

### Continuing Education (CE) Instructions for Attendees:

- Sign-in sheets, evaluations, and contact forms for each discipline are available at the registration desk.
- Please complete an evaluation regarding how your needs are being met.
- CME/CE credits are available for physicians and PAs. Instructions to retrieve your CME certificate will be forwarded via e-mail. Please ensure we have your correct e-mail address.
- NURSES - A completed evaluation MUST be returned in order to receive contact hours. Complete the evaluation form included in your handout packet and return to the registration desk.

## TO CONTACT US:

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ocme@downstate.edu

Meeting participants, including speakers and attendees, may be photographed, filmed, recorded or videotaped by a Downstate representative throughout the event.



# N O T E S