



March 16, 2026

David L. Callender, M.D.  
President and CEO  
Memorial Hermann Health System

Dear Dr. Callender:

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals—PETA entities have more than 10.4 million members and supporters globally, including hundreds of thousands across Texas—with a request that we hope you'll agree would help *chart* the way toward a healthier Houston: Would you please remove unhealthy, processed meats—all linked to colorectal and other types of cancer—from patient menus and hospital cafeterias and replace those selections with healthy vegan meals? Please allow me to elaborate.

I'm sure you're aware that the World Health Organization classifies processed meats—including deli slices, bacon, and sausage—as a Group 1 carcinogen, the same category as tobacco smoke. That message is currently echoed in kiosk ads we've placed around the Memorial Hermann–Texas Medical Center campus, reinforcing guidance from leading organizations such as the American Institute for Cancer Research and the American Society of Clinical Oncology, which advise avoiding processed meats entirely to reduce the risk of developing cancer.

By contrast, healthy vegan diets have been shown to lower cancer risk, cholesterol, and high blood pressure and to improve cardiovascular health. As if that weren't enough, just one year after NYC Health + Hospitals made plant-based meals the default, meal satisfaction rose to 90%, the system's carbon emissions fell by 36%, and its costs dropped by \$0.59/meal—talk about a triple win, instead of a triple bypass! And because preventing suffering is central to healthcare, it's worth noting that each patient, guest, and staff member who goes vegan can spare more than 200 animals a year from the cruelty of the meat industry.

Since you are one of the most influential people in healthcare, we hope you'll agree it's time to go *tofurky* on unhealthy foods. We'd be happy to help with meal plans, recipes, and tips. Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to hearing from you.

Very truly yours,

Ingrid Newkirk  
Founder

PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS

[Washington](#)

1536 16th St. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-483-PETA

[Los Angeles](#)

2624 W. Sunset Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90026  
323-644-PETA

[Norfolk](#)

501 Front St.  
Norfolk, VA 23510  
757-622-PETA

[Info@peta.org](mailto:Info@peta.org)

[PETA.org](http://PETA.org)

[Entities](#)

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- [PETA Netherlands](#)
- [PETA Foundation \(U.K.\)](#)



March 16, 2026

Debra F. Sukin, M.H.A., Ph.D., FACHE  
President and CEO  
Texas Children's Hospital

Dear Dr. Sukin:

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals—PETA entities have more than 10.4 million members and supporters globally, including hundreds of thousands across Texas—with a request that we hope you'll agree would help *chart* the way toward a healthier Houston: Would you please remove unhealthy, processed meats—all linked to colorectal and other types of cancer—from patient menus and hospital cafeterias and replace those selections with healthy vegan meals? Please allow me to elaborate.

I'm sure you're aware that the World Health Organization classifies processed meats—including deli slices, bacon, and sausage—as a Group 1 carcinogen, the same category as tobacco smoke. That message is currently echoed in kiosk ads we've placed around the Texas Children's Hospital–Texas Medical Center campus, reinforcing guidance from leading organizations such as the American Institute for Cancer Research and the American Society of Clinical Oncology, which advise avoiding processed meats entirely to reduce the risk of developing cancer.

By contrast, healthy vegan diets have been shown to lower cancer risk, cholesterol, and high blood pressure and to improve cardiovascular health. As if that weren't enough, just one year after NYC Health + Hospitals made plant-based meals the default, meal satisfaction rose to 90%, the system's carbon emissions fell by 36%, and its costs dropped by \$0.59/meal—talk about a triple win, instead of a triple bypass! And because preventing suffering is central to healthcare, it's worth noting that each patient, guest, and staff member who goes vegan can spare more than 200 animals a year from the cruelty of the meat industry.

Since TCH is the top children's hospital in Texas and among the very best pediatric hospitals in the nation, we hope you'll agree it's time to go cold *tofurky* on unhealthy foods. We'd be happy to help with meal plans, recipes, and tips. Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to hearing from you.

Very truly yours,

Ingrid Newkirk  
Founder

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