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## Wetzel County FARMacy Program Kick-Off This Friday

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**Charleston, WV** - The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA), in conjunction with Wheeling Health Right and Food Justice Lab WVU, will kick off the first year of the FARMacy Program 11:00 a.m. this Friday, June 1<sup>st</sup> at the Wetzel County Hospital in New Martinsville. The program is encouraging patients to use produce in lieu of prescriptions for healthier outcomes. The program was started by PA-C Amanda Cummins and Dr. Carol Greco, to bring fresh, locally grown produce to rural communities.

“Providing fresher, healthier produce to our communities tackles two major issues,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. “FARMacy helps address rising healthcare costs while decreasing the number of medicine being prescribed, as well as provide more opportunities to local farmers. This is a win-win for West Virginia.”

FARMacy, Wetzel County is managed by Holly Giovianazzo who is working with Jon and Lisa M. DuMars of the Garden Path, Grow Local Go Local and other farmers to provide locally grown produce, as well as diet and food instructions to patients. The goal is to help create healthier community members by reducing the risk or help control chronic diseases like diabetes, high blood pressure and hypertension. In addition, the project aims to educate patients on healthier foods and the importance of produce within patient diets.

"We have been working with five core farms in Wetzel and Tyler County since the Fall of 2017 in preparation of this program. The bonus is these farmers are working together to fill needs at a larger capacity and variety, as well as meet a prescribed demand," said WVDA Business Development Planning Coordinator Kacey Gantzer. "Not only are we improving the health of our patients, we are providing a driver for the local economy."

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Giovinazzo will be working with local growers, securing the produce for each week, coordinating educational and promotional information and act as the liaison between Wheeling Health Right and producers. She will also oversee the distribution of produce to the 25 participants. Participants have set goals for weight loss, lowering blood pressure, bad cholesterol and blood glucose levels.

For more information, please contact Holly Giovinazzo Wetzel County FARMacy Manager at 304-771-8482 or Dr. Carol Greco D.O. or Amanda Cummins PA-C at 304-233-9323.

*The West Virginia Department of Agriculture protects plant, animal and human health through a variety of scientific, regulatory and consumer protection programs. The Commissioner of Agriculture is one of six statewide elected officials who sits on the Board of Public Works.*

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