

**ALLEN BEALS, M.D., J.D.**  
*Commissioner of Health*



**MARYELLEN ODELL**  
*County Executive*

**ROBERT MORRIS, P.E.**  
*Director of Environmental Health*

## **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date: Thursday, January 16, 2014**

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### **New Dedicated Specimen “Prep” Room Opens at Putnam’s Department of Health**

Brewster, NY— A new specimen preparation room is up and running at the Putnam County Department of Health’s main office at One Geneva Road in Brewster. Renovations were completed for the dedicated space last week, providing one consolidated area for use by both environmental and nursing staffs.

“The new prep room is an important addition to the department,” explains Commissioner of Health Allen Beals, MD. “Our “capture-the-bat” initiative has been such a tremendous success that we have had as many as 15 bats brought in for testing in a single day during the peak summer months. You can imagine the issues this creates without an area dedicated to processing them.” All surrounding counties have similar onsite facilities that help expedite preparations to better serve residents.

“The health department has reduced the number of expensive rabies treatments saving thousands of County dollars,” continues Dr. Beals. “This is largely due to the success of our capture-the-bat program and the Feral Cat Taskforce.”

The room includes a built-in fume hood, a simple ventilation device that reduces personnel exposure to noxious materials by providing continuous airflow away from the user. A wide variety of samples can be collected, prepared and tested in the prep room—anything from those extracted from potentially rabid animals, to samples used to diagnosis infections in humans. The space was planned and renovated completely by Putnam County personnel from the facilities and highway departments, with no additional outside costs incurred.

The Health Department’s mission is to improve and protect the health of the Putnam County community, composed of nearly 100,000 residents. Core services include community health assessment, disease surveillance and control, environmental health protection, family health promotion, emergency

preparedness and health education. For more information, please visit our website at [www.putnamcountyny.com/health](http://www.putnamcountyny.com/health); or visit our social media sites on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/putnamhealth](http://www.facebook.com/putnamhealth) and Twitter @PutnamHealthNY.

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Caption for attached photo:

Health Commissioner Allen Beals, MD, demonstrates the opening of the protective hood to County Executive MaryEllen Odell in the new specimen prep room at the Putnam County Department of Health. In the closed position, the fume hood helps shield the user from possible noxious materials from a specimen.