

Michael J. Nesheiwat, M.D.  
Interim Commissioner of Health



MaryEllen Odell  
County Executive

Robert Morris, P.E., M.P.H.  
Director of Environmental Health

Department of Health  
1 Geneva Road, Brewster, New York 10509  
(845) 808-1390

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date: February 8, 2016**

**Contact: Barbara Ilardi, Public Information Officer, (845) 808-1390**

**Putnam County Implements “No Smoking, No Vaping” Policy**

BREWSTER, NY—While health officials debate the question of electronic cigarettes nationwide, Putnam County is moving ahead with implementation of a revised County Code, that expands the definition of smoking to include the use of electronic cigarettes. What this means is that where smoking is prohibited in public places, such as a Putnam restaurant, bar, or school, then using electronic cigarettes is also against the law. Last May the Putnam County Legislature voted unanimously to extend the County’s Clean Indoor Air Act legislation to include all vapor-producing devices. POW’R Against Tobacco, a community advocacy group, funded through the New York State Bureau of Tobacco Control, had been instrumental in efforts to educate about the legislation’s importance.

“Protecting Putnam County residents is our highest priority. We are taking the lead here to protect our residents and visitors from the harms of tobacco,” said MaryEllen Odell, County Executive, “and the health department has already begun distributing ‘no-smoking-no-vaping’ signs to area establishments.”

“The vapor from e-cigarettes is not benign,” said Michael Nesheiwat, MD, Putnam County’s Interim Health Commissioner. “It has fewer toxic ingredients than cigarette smoke, but that does not make it safe. Some research has shown that nicotine replacement therapy during pregnancy has adverse effects on the developing fetus, but most of the science so far focuses on the thousands of chemicals in

cigarettes, not the nicotine present in both traditional and electronic varieties.”

Primary enforcement of the new code pertaining to vaping, as with cigarettes, is the responsibility of the owner of the establishment. Owners, landlords and other establishment managers are now expected to ask patrons to turn off e-cigarettes in the same way they would ask one to put out a cigarette, pipe or cigar. As with tobacco smoking, the Putnam County Department of Health can be notified to make a complaint.

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, emergency preparedness, environmental health protection, family health promotion and health education. For more information, please visit the PCDOH website at [www.putnamcountyny.com/health](http://www.putnamcountyny.com/health) or visit the social media sites on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/putnamhealth](http://www.facebook.com/putnamhealth), [www.facebook.com/RunWalkPutnam](http://www.facebook.com/RunWalkPutnam), [www.instagram.com/PutnamHealthNY](http://www.instagram.com/PutnamHealthNY) and Twitter @PutnamHealthNY.

# # #