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Putnam County's Department of Health Receives National Accreditation— First in Hudson Valley

BREWSTER, NY— The Putnam County Department of Health (PCDOH) achieved national accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) on March 8, 2016. The five-year designation demonstrates increased accountability and credibility to the public, funders, elected officials and partner organizations. The accreditation process works to ultimately transform the quality and performance of the nation's more than 2,500 health departments. The PCDOH is one of fewer than 200 to have achieved this honor.

"This achievement is the result of four years of focused work by the health department," said County Executive MaryEllen Odell. "We should be very proud. We are the first county in the Hudson Valley and one of a select few from among the many counties in New York State."

Michael J. Nesheiwat, MD, Interim Health Commissioner, said, "This is an important national designation. Hospitals need to be accredited; now health departments can take up a similar challenge. This accomplishment of our county's health department serves to reassure our residents that we have an efficient and effective public health system."

PHAB president and CEO Kaye Bender, PhD, RN, FAAN, said, "The Putnam County Department of Health joins the growing ranks of accredited health departments in a strong commitment to their public health mission." Residents served by a nationally accredited health department can be

reassured that their health department has demonstrated the capacity to protect and promote the health of their community."

The health department's journey to PHAB accreditation initially began in 2012 with the preliminary pre-accreditation process of strategic planning. Then in August 2013, a formal statement of intent was submitted to the accreditation board. The process wrapped up in early January 2016 with a two-day site visit by a team of trained peer examiners, familiar with typical health department procedures, who scrutinized documents and questioned staff members in face-to-face discussions.

From start to finish, partners throughout the county and nearly every staff member of the health department were engaged. The accreditation process also provided a way to measure health department performance against a set of national standards, while increasing communication and collaboration with community partners and identifying areas for improvement in the Community Health Improvement Plan. The PCDOH examined their own operations, services and mission, and formulated a strategic plan and workforce development plan. When all was done, more than 1,080 electronic files were prepared and submitted, equaling more than 1.15 gigabytes of data.

The successful conclusion was reached at the PHAB board meeting on March 8, when committee members voted after reviewing the site visitors' final reports.

Launched in 2011, PHAB was created to serve as the national public health accreditation body and is jointly funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Woods Johnson Foundation.

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 or visit the social media sites on Facebook at www.facebook.com/putnamhealth, www.facebook.com/RunWalkPutnam, www.instagram.com/PutnamHealthNY and Twitter @PutnamHealthNY.

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