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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lifestyle Modifications and Screening Can Lower Colorectal Cancer Risk

Brewster, NY – Colorectal cancer is the fourth most prevalent cancer among Putnam County residents, according to recent statistics from the NYSDOH Cancer Registry. Early detection is key, and March, National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, is a good time to plan and schedule a screening, and make some lifestyle changes for further protection. “Screenings for colorectal cancer can detect polyps before cancer even begins,” says Allen Beals, M.D., Putnam County Commissioner of Health. “If polyps are found early, they can be removed easily.”

Colorectal cancer can strike younger adults, but most cases are in people aged 50 or older. According to the Centers for Disease Control, if everyone who is 50 and older were screened regularly, as many as 60% of deaths from this cancer could be avoided. Some individuals may need to begin testing earlier, as certain conditions, such as family or personal history of colorectal cancer, inflammatory bowel disease or colorectal polyps, may put them at greater risk. Recommended screening tests include: stool tests, colonoscopy, sigmoidoscopy or a barium enema.

Symptoms for colorectal cancer typically do not surface until it has spread and become life threatening. Symptoms may include bleeding from the rectum, blood in the stool, change in bowel habits, decreased appetite, weakness and fatigue, and should prompt a call to your health care provider.

Lifestyle choices can help protect against developing colorectal cancer and other cancers. The American Cancer Society recommends the following to reduce a person’s risk:

- Do not smoke

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Be physically active on a regular basis
- Make healthy food choices

No single food or nutrient protects against colorectal cancer by itself; a variety of factors in foods work together to provide anti-cancer effects. There is convincing evidence that a high fiber plant-based style of eating, incorporating a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and beans, helps lower the risk for several cancers, including colorectal cancer. For more information about healthy eating to reduce your cancer risk, visit www.AICR.org.

The New York State Cancer Services Program (CSP) provides breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screenings at NO COST to women and men who:

- Do not have health insurance OR have health insurance that does not cover the cost of these screenings
- Cannot pay for these screenings
- Meet income eligibility requirements
- Meet age requirements
- Live in New York State

Additional services include diagnostic testing if results are abnormal and referrals for treatment. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact the Cancer Services Program at 1-866-442-2262 or visit <http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/cancer/services/partnerships> and click on your county.

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