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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Brewster, NY - Early detection is one of the most important strategies in the battle against cancer. March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month and the Putnam County Department of Health would like to remind you that screening tests are particularly important for detecting colorectal cancer. There are often no apparent symptoms for colorectal cancer until it has spread and become life-threatening. Detecting colorectal cancer in its early stages is when treatment is most effective. In many cases, a screening test can find polyps before they ever develop into cancer and are easily removed. Nearly 90% of all colorectal cancer cases could be prevented through regular screening tests.

The Putnam County Department of Health recommends that everyone aged 50 and older should talk to their health care provider about a test for colorectal cancer. Although colorectal cancer can strike younger adults, most cases are in people aged 50 or older. Some individuals may need to begin testing at an earlier age, as certain conditions may put them at greater risk for colorectal cancer. Conditions that may put you at greater risk include:

- A parent, sibling or child who had colorectal cancer
- A personal history of colon cancer
- Colon Polyps
- Inflammatory Bowel Disease

Symptoms of colorectal cancer include bleeding from the rectum, blood in the stool, change in bowel habits, decreased appetite, weakness and fatigue. If you experience any of these symptoms you should tell your health

care provider.

There are ways to help protect against developing colorectal cancer. The American Cancer Society recommends the following to reduce a person's risk:

- Do not smoke
- Get to and stay at a healthy weight
- Be physically active on a regular basis
- Make healthy food choices

Eating well and being physically active are important for overall health, can aid in weight management, and may reduce your risk for several cancers. The Putnam County Department of Health recommends that adults strive for at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity most days. To build a healthy diet, eat 5 or more servings of vegetables and fruits each day, include at least 3 servings of whole grains, and limit intake of processed meats such as hot dogs, deli meats, and bacon, as well as red meats like beef, pork and lamb.

The New York State Department of Health funds Cancer Services Program Partnerships statewide to provide access to colorectal cancer screening for uninsured men and women over 50, as well as breast and cervical cancer screenings for eligible uninsured women over age 40. 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 of Putnam County at 845-808-1335 extension 43174.

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