

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



**MARYELLEN ODELL**  
*County Executive*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**PCDOH Advocates “B4Stage4” for Early Mental Health Treatment;  
Learn the Warning Signs**

BREWSTER, NY— Improving mental, emotional and behavioral (MEB) health is a top priority in Putnam County’s Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). This May, Mental Health Month, the Putnam County Department of Health is promoting the advantages of addressing mental health symptoms as early as possible, before symptoms escalate. This in fact is the theme of the 2015 Mental Health Month, conceived in today’s texting parlance as “B4Stage4.”

“Unaddressed mental health issues can escalate to critical levels and potentially lead to suicide,” says County Executive MaryEllen Odell. “That’s why our mental health providers and community partners are working hard to treat these problems head on and early in the process.”

Health Commissioner Allen Beals, MD, points out that, “When we think about heart disease or cancer, we don’t wait to treat them. We start as soon as possible—before stage 4. We should do the same for individuals who have mental health issues and Putnam’s Mental Health Association is taking the lead to make this happen.”

Research shows that ignoring symptoms results in precious lost time. It is during the earliest years that individuals still have support through family and friends, and at school and work, that improve recovery efforts and outcomes. Intervening then can change the life trajectory of people living with mental illnesses. (See attached fact sheet on warning signs.)

Megan Castellano, executive director of the Mental Health Association in Putnam County, Inc., and Marla Behler, program coordinator for the Child Advocacy Center of Putnam County, have been instrumental in this community effort. Together they co-chair the Suicide Prevention Task Force that started in 2013. Other task force members and CHIP partners include the Mental Health Providers Group; the Putnam County Department of Health; the Putnam County Department of Social Services, Mental Health and the Youth Bureau; Putnam Hospital Center; and the Veterans Task Force.

Everyone is encouraged to learn the signs and to ask for help if needed. The Mental Health Association in Putnam County's national organization, Mental Health America, has fact sheets and online adult screening tools for depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder at its website, under "Finding Help." The web address is: [www.mentalhealthamerica.net](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net).

Mental Health Month, commemorated each May, was started 66 years ago by the Mental Health America to raise awareness about mental health conditions and the importance of good mental health for everyone.

The Mental Health Association in Putnam County, Inc. is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote a vision of recovery for individuals and families coping with mental health issues in our community. This is accomplished through several specialized, community-based programs. For further information, visit their website at <http://www.mhaputnam.org>

The Health Department's mission is to improve and protect the health of Putnam County residents through prevention of illness and injury. 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 the website at [www.putnamcountyny.com](http://www.putnamcountyny.com); or the social media sites on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/putnamhealth](http://www.facebook.com/putnamhealth) and Twitter @PutnamHealthNY.

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