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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public Health Summit Attracts Record Crowd,

Reducing chronic disease and improving mental health identified as top priorities

Brewster, NY—More than 70 community healthcare providers and public health administrators attended the Putnam County Public Health Summit III, held in Michael T. Weber auditorium of Putnam Hospital Center (PHC) on Wednesday, May 22. Organized by the Putnam County Department of Health (PCDOH) and hosted by the hospital, the day-long event brought together nearly 40 Putnam organizations for a brainstorming session to help identify and discuss the top health priorities facing the County.

From the first activity to the last, reducing chronic disease and improving mental health clearly appeared to be the most pressing issues. The work did not start from scratch. New York State's Prevention Agenda 2013—2017 provided the framework having pre-identified five broad goals. Individual counties were tasked to choose specific areas for their efforts based on the needs of their particular communities.

Deputy Putnam County Executive Bruce J. Walker, Maureen Zipparo, President of Putnam Hospital Center and Allen Beals, MD, Commissioner of Health, offered introductory remarks, setting the tone for the day. Mr. Walker spoke about the continuing efforts of the County Executive's Office to keep the budget in line without losing needed programs; Dr. Beals pointed to the tremendous pressures being felt nationwide in both public health and healthcare and the need to tailor programs that focus on prevention and healthy lifestyle promotion for residents.

Public Health Summit, page 2

Supervising Public Health Educator Barbara Ilardi outlined the New York State requirements for local health departments which includes two plans—the Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). Ms. Ilardi further highlighted the “Best Practice” process for formulating these, the MAPP process, short for “Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships.” This process involves community input at nearly every step of the way.

Deb Gesner, from Health Quest, the umbrella organization of PHC, reviewed hospital mandates, and epidemiologist Erin Ray Pascaretti from the Health Department, reviewed the hard data available to help provide an accurate picture of the county’s health at present and serve as a guide for areas for improvement.

Putnam County residents who have not yet done so and still wish to provide their opinion concerning community strengths and areas for improvement are asked to visit the Putnam County website where the survey is still accessible at www.putnamcountyny.com . It will run until June 30. (The direct link is www.putnamcountyny.com/lhp/surveyp)

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 and health education. For more information, please visit our website at www.putnamcountyny.com; or visit our social media sites on Facebook at www.facebook.com/putnamhealth and Twitter @PutnamHealthNY.

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