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Eat Smart Restaurant Week Returns September 27 through October 11; *Food Establishments Encouraged to Sign Up Early*

Brewster, NY—After last year’s successful launch, the Annual Eat Smart Restaurant Week is back. The two-week event starts on Sunday, September 27 and runs through Sunday, October 11, giving customers an easy opportunity to enjoy delicious and healthy meals at participating Putnam eateries. One of last year’s crowd pleasers was spicy cavatelli with zucchini, leeks, extra virgin olive oil, red pepper flakes and pecorino; another was fresh Norwegian salmon filet baked with olives, garlic, tomato and fresh herbs, served with spinach.

“In Putnam, so many of our restaurants showcase that delicious and healthy can go hand-in-hand,” said County Executive MaryEllen Odell. “It is especially helpful that so many chefs use a farm-to-table approach that promotes using locally grown ingredients. With more and more people choosing to eat out on a regular basis, it is important that our restaurants use their culinary talents to entice people to eat healthy dishes.” According to the National Restaurant Association nearly half of a family’s food budget goes to foods prepared outside the home, and this is a trend nationwide.

“Food is a great enjoyment,” declared Health Commissioner Allen Beals, MD “and food producers, and many chain restaurants, take advantage of this. They spend billions of dollars developing products laden with salt, sugar and fat, and then billions more on advertising. The end result is the marketing of many unhealthy items and residents with increasing waistlines. The eat-

smart idea is based on the belief that customers should not skimp on tastiness, but should also not shortchange themselves on their health.”

Last year a total of 35 restaurants and food establishment participated in the event which featured an emphasis on fresh, locally grown vegetables, realistic portion sizes, and healthy, but limited oils and sodium.

“Restaurant support was very enthusiastic,” said Dr. Beals. “We’ve had great input from chefs and other partners at Putnam’s top restaurants.” All restaurants submitted their recipes for evaluation by health department nutritionists and the two partnered to tweak them to perfection.

“Most restaurants easily grasped the concept,” explained Kristine Boyle, the health department nutritionist who led the evaluation process. “There really were few major adjustments that needed to be made. Fresh foods, herbs and other tasty condiments in the hands of expert chefs, and even knowledgeable cooks at home, can go a very long way in making a mouth-watering meal.”

Dine-in restaurants are not the only participants in Eat Smart Restaurant Week. The program is open to all food establishments in Putnam who are willing to offer at least one healthy selection. Last year a few delicatessens and a chain “fast food” restaurant took part in the event. Restaurants interested in more information or participation should contact Kris Boyle or senior public health sanitarian Shawn Rogan, who coordinate Eat Smart Restaurant Week at the PCDOH, at 845-808-1390. Participating restaurants will be posted online at the health department home page at www.putnamcountyny.com/health, beginning in August.

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

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