

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



MARYELLEN ODELL
County Executive

ROBERT MORRIS, P.E., M.P.H.
Director of Environmental Health

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
1 Geneva Road, Brewster, New York 10509
Phone # (845) 808-1390

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: July 16, 2015

Contact: Barbara Haldi, Public Information Officer, (845) 808-1390

**Calling All Breastfeeding Moms: Putnam County Department of Health
Hosts Global Breastfeeding Awareness Event**

Brewster, NY- On Friday, July 31, Putnam County's breastfeeding moms will join thousands of others around the world for the 2015 "Big Latch On." The free annual event, an opportunity to support and promote breastfeeding, is traditionally a kick-off celebration for World Breastfeeding Week, August 1 through 7. Last year approximately 14,000 children were breastfed simultaneously in 826 locations in 31 countries.

Putnam's "Big Latch-On," hosted by the Putnam County Department of Health (PCDOH), will take place at the Carmel Fire Department, 94 Gleneida Avenue, the only site in Putnam County. Fun activities for young children, health education and information will be available, door prizes awarded, and refreshments served.

"This year is the Year of the Family in Putnam County and what represents family better than a mother and her newborn child," said County Executive MaryEllen Odell. "The latch-on event is a socially responsible initiative to support Putnam women and their babies. Breastfeeding has been proven time and time again to be the best for infants and their moms, and the county strongly supports its own working breastfeeding moms."

"Breast milk provides the ideal nutrition," explains Health Commissioner Allen Beals, MD. "Its composition cannot be replicated by a manufactured formula. It is highly digestible and provides numerous antibodies, protecting babies from bacteria and viruses. It even lowers the risk of children developing ear infections, allergies or asthma." Dr. Beals should know, having spent 22 years practicing as an

obstetrician/gynecologist delivering over 4,000 babies. Among other programs, the PCDOH hosts weekly free new moms support groups at the Mahopac and Kent libraries, with PCDOH nurses who are also International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLC).

Pre-registration for the latch-on is preferred, but walk-ins are welcome. The event begins at 9 a.m. with “latch on” promptly at 10:30 a.m., and activities until noon. Moms should arrive by 10 a.m. to settle in, and are encouraged to bring a blanket, pillow or cushion for more comfortable seating. All breastfeeding mothers in Putnam and surrounding counties are invited to participate and help break last year’s record. Siblings, other family members and friends are welcome as well.

For more information or to pre-register, call 845-808-1390, ext. 43232. To learn more about the Big Latch On, visit www.biglatchon.org. For more information about maternal and child health as well as local child-friendly events, visit the PCDOH’s dedicated parents Facebook page at www.facebook.com/putnamparents.

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, emergency preparedness, environmental health protection, 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.

###