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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Possible Health Inspection Scam Targeting Restaurants and Delis

Brewster, N.Y. – The Putnam County Department of Health is advising restaurant owners and operators to be wary of callers misrepresenting themselves as Putnam County food service inspectors.

In recent weeks, there have been three restaurants in Putnam County which received telephone calls from someone claiming to be with the “Health Department” and wanting to schedule an inspection. The caller has asked the restaurant owner to make a telephone call to get a “code number” for the inspection and threatened fining the restaurant if they did not cooperate. The caller was not with the Putnam County Health Department! This may be part of a possible national scam, as other states have reported similar situations. Law enforcement officials have been notified.

The Putnam County Department of Health does not call to schedule inspections with restaurants or deli's. In rare instances a food service operator may be called if the business is closed during normal business hours. Should you receive a call for an inspection, the Health Department welcomes your call to verify that you have actually been called by our department.

To protect your business from fraud, imposters and scams, remember:

- No new Health Department procedure has been implemented for inspections. A caller who asks you to participate in a "code" process is most likely part of a fraud scheme.
- Health Department staff and any legitimate agency will have photo identification. Ask to see an ID if you have doubts about the authenticity of the inspector visiting your business.
- Never give out personal or business information unless you are certain of the identity of the person you are speaking to.

Please telephone the Putnam County Department of Health at (845) 808-1390 ext. 43216 with any questions.

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