

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



MARYELLEN ODELL
County Executive

ROBERT MORRIS, P.E.
Director of Environmental Health

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
1 Geneva Road, Brewster, New York 10509
845-808-1390

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: Tuesday, July 30, 2013

Contact: Barbara Ilardi, Public Information Officer, 845-808-1390

PCDOH Announces Expanded Services to Screen for Hepatitis C

Brewster, NY—Hepatitis C, a blood infection that causes liver disease, is on the rise, both in Putnam County and around the country. Today an estimated 4 million Americans are living with chronic Hep C. In order to screen for this potentially serious illness, the Putnam County Department of Health (PCDOH) has expanded its services. A rapid screening test can be performed in the health department offices in approximately 20 minutes. Positive tests are then referred for confirmatory testing and treatment, which includes new, more effective medications.

“We recommend that all residents born between 1945 and 1965 be tested once, even without any other risk factors,” explains Allen Beals, MD, Commissioner of Health. “Concern stems from the silent nature of the disease, since most people infected with the Hep C virus have no symptoms,” Dr. Beals continues. In fact, 75 percent of infected individuals are unaware of their status. These broad screening guidelines are endorsed by the New York State Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the United States Preventive Services Task Force.

Each year approximately 17,000 new Hep C cases are diagnosed, while an estimated 15,000 die from the disease which can result in serious liver complications, such as cirrhosis or

-more-

PCDOH expands services to screen for Hep C, page 2

scarring, and cancer. Hepatitis C infection is the leading reason for liver transplantation in the U.S., and is expected to result in healthcare costs topping \$80 billion in the next ten years.

For further information on Hep C, or to schedule an appointment for screening, please call 808-1390, extension 43114.

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.gov; or visit our social media sites on Facebook at www.facebook.com/putnamhealth and Twitter @PutnamHealthNY.

###