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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Putnam County Department of Health Holds Point of Dispensing (POD) Drill
County Employees Act as “Patients”**

Brewster, NY- The Health Department, working in collaboration with the Bureau of Emergency Services and the Sheriff’s Department, conducted a mock Point of Dispensing (POD) drill on August 12, distributing life-saving medications to more than 350 Putnam “residents.” County employees were recruited to act as residents who potentially had been “exposed” to a biological agent, in a simulated test of the local emergency response system.

“This particular scenario involved a make-believe release of anthrax,” explained Allen Beals, MD, Commissioner of Health. “We were testing our ability to pre-register and review residents’ information, and then based on their answers, distribute the appropriate preventive antibiotic medication to them to prevent illness,” Dr. Beals continued.

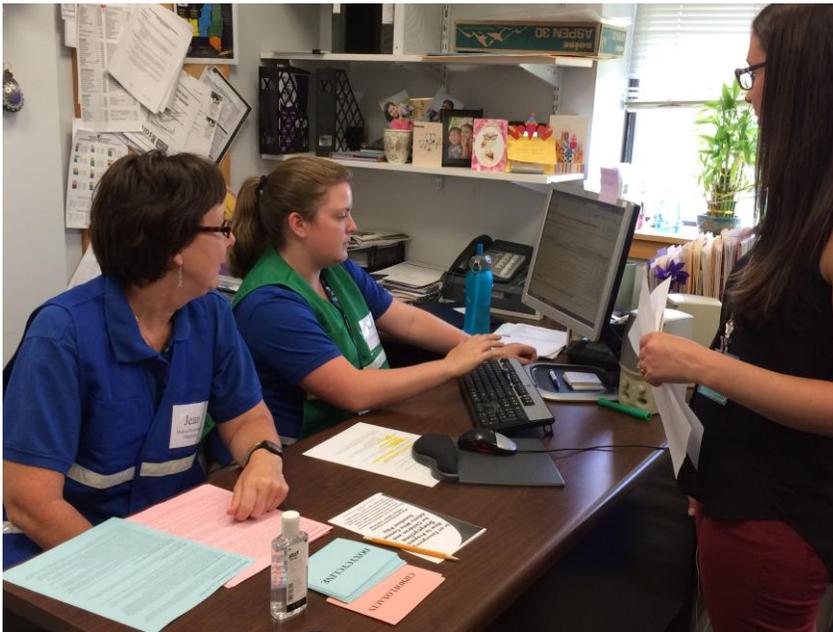
The drill was part of a New York State, mandated exercise requiring local health departments and their community partners to practice scenarios for emergency preparedness. Testing the NYS Department of Health’s online pre-registration system was a necessary component of the practice event.

The PCDOH, along with the Bureau of Emergency Services, is further planning to provide prescriptions of doxycycline or ciprofloxacin to the county’s first responders. These medications are those typically prescribed for an anthrax exposure and were in fact the “fake medicines” being distributed in the POD drill yesterday. By providing prescriptions to first responders, they would be prepared to respond in the event of a future anthrax release.

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.

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Public health nurses questioned all participants and reviewed their submitted information online before distributing “fake” medications for them and family members. Each “resident” had been asked to pre-register for the drill in NYS DOH computer system before arriving at the health department. Onsite registration was also available.