

**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

Phone# (845)-808-1390

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date: Monday, August 19, 2013**

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

### **Breast Milk Offers Numerous Benefits; PCDOH and NYSDOH Team Up to Increase Breastfeeding Rates**

Brewster, NY— World Breastfeeding Month ends on August 31, bringing to conclusion a month of advocacy in support of this practice as old as humankind itself. However, the value of breastfeeding extends beyond any particular calendar date. Infants always benefit from the superior nutrition of breast milk over formula and the Putnam County Department of Health joins the New York State Department of Health and other national health organizations in efforts to increase rates of continued breastfeeding.

“Physicians and researchers recommend exclusive breastfeeding for six months,” says Allen Beals, MD, Commissioner of Health, “and so do the New York State Department of Health, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the World Health Organization.” For babies, the health benefits are well known—protection against infections and disease; lower asthma, diabetes, heart disease and obesity rates; and even higher IQs. For mothers, the risk of breast and ovarian cancers, diabetes and osteoporosis are all reduced. “Sounds like it’s a good idea for everyone,” Dr. Beals continues. Exceptions do exist, as in the case of HIV positive women who may transfer the virus in their milk.

To assist Putnam County mothers, the PCDOH offers both in-home breastfeeding support

and education, and free breastfeeding support groups that meet twice a month. All new mothers and newborns, preemies and multiples who are Putnam County residents are eligible for home visits. The bi-monthly support groups meet from 10 am to noon, on the second Wednesday and third Thursday of the month. The Wednesday group is held at the Cornerstone Park Building, 1 Fair Street, and the Thursday group is at the Health Department office, 1 Geneva Road. A Certified Lactation Counselor is available at each session to provide information and support. No registration necessary—Drop-ins welcome. For more information on either program, call Rebecca, Jean or Diane at 808-1390, x 43150.

The Health Department's mission is to improve and protect the health of the Putnam County community, made up of nearly 100,000 residents. 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 <http://www.putnamcountyny.gov/health>; or visit our social media sites on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/putnamhealth](http://www.facebook.com/putnamhealth) and Twitter @PutnamHealthNY.

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