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Putnam County Department of Health Schedules First Fall Flu Clinic

Brewster, NY— Flu season officially arrived this month and cases have already been reported in Texas. The Putnam County Department of Health has skilled and experienced nurses ready to administer flu vaccinations. The first public clinic is next Monday, September 21, from 2 to 6:30 p.m. at the Carmel Fire Department, Route 52 and Vink Drive in Carmel. Getting vaccinated as early as possible has advantages since it takes about two weeks for antibodies to develop and provide protection.

“Getting a flu shot is important for a host of reasons, keeping us healthy, saving money on medical and prescription costs and because it is the socially responsible thing to do,” says MaryEllen Odell, County Executive. “If you receive a flu vaccine, it protects those around you who cannot receive a vaccine because they are too young or suffer from a particular medical condition.” County Executive Odell, who gets her flu shot every year, is referring to what public health officials call “herd immunity,” which means if the majority of people are immunized, then they protect the few others who cannot be vaccinated.

“Certain groups especially should be vaccinated,” says Allen Beals, MD, Commissioner of Health. “These include pregnant women, health care workers, those over 50 years of age, and children 6 months through 18 years of age. Also individuals with chronic (long-lasting) medical

conditions, or those who live with them, should be sure to get vaccinated. Individuals in these groups are at high risk of serious complications, if they come down with the flu."

The clinic is open to all Putnam County residents 18 years of age and older. The fee for flu vaccine is \$25 for residents under 65 years of age. Those 65 years and older, or with a Medicare card, can receive the vaccine free of charge. High-dose flu vaccine is being offered for seniors, aged 65 years and older, as studies show this vaccine is more effective for this population. Proof of residency (driver's license) is required. Pneumonia vaccine will not be available through the Health Department's public flu clinics this year.

Appointments are not necessary, but a signed consent form is required. Forms will be available on the Putnam County website at <http://www.putnamcountyny.com/health/immunization>.

In order to streamline the onsite process, people are encouraged to download the forms, complete them and bring them to the clinic. Forms will also be available at the clinic.

Additional flu clinics will be held later this year. For dates and further details check the PCDOH website. Flu vaccination will also be offered by the Health Department in all school districts this fall strictly for students and staff. Check your school calendar or with the school nurse for details of these school-based clinics.

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

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