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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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September is Fall Prevention Awareness Month – Take Steps to Reduce Your Risk of Fall Related Injuries

Brewster – The Putnam County Department of Health would like to remind Putnam County residents that one of the best ways for seniors to remain independent is to prevent falls and fall-related injuries.

Falls are the leading cause of injury deaths and hospital visits among adults age 65 and older. Each year, 900 New Yorkers aged 65 years and older will die due to a fall, and more than 125,000 will be injured severely enough to require hospital treatment. 60% of adults 65 and older who are hospitalized due to a fall will end up in a nursing home or rehabilitation center. Common injuries as a result of a fall include traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and hip fractures.

"Fall-related injuries in older adults are a major public health problem," said Susan Hardman, Director of the New York State Health Department's Bureau of Injury Prevention. "As baby boomers age, we likely will see a significant increase in these injuries. Fortunately, there are simple strategies for reducing the risk of falling."

To reduce your risk:

- Follow a physical activity program to improve strength and balance.
- Have your health care provider review medications for potential side effects such as dizziness and drowsiness.

- Have your eye doctor check to make sure your prescription for glasses is correct and to check for vision impairment conditions such as glaucoma or cataracts.
- Assess your home for safety, and make the necessary modifications. Common home hazards include:
 - Clutter in walkways and on stairs causing tripping
 - Slippery or inconsistent flooring surfaces causing falls
 - Poor or inadequate lighting
 - Pets and pet-related objects on the floor
 - Lack of stair railings or grab bars
 - Lack of easy access to bathrooms and scatter rugs without no-skid backing

More information about fall prevention in older adults is available on the New York State Department of Health website at www.nyhealth.gov/prevention/injury_prevention .

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