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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**\*REVISED 10/8/2010 4:00PM**

**DATE: Friday, October 8, 2010**

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### **OCTOBER MARKS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH**

*The Putnam County Department of Health Urges Women to Get Screened for Breast Cancer;  
Early Detection Key to Effective Treatment*

Brewster, NY - October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and Sherlita Amler, M.D., Commissioner of Health, today urged all women to learn about their risk and talk to their health care provider about getting screened for breast cancer.

“All women, aged 40 and older, should get a mammogram every one to two years, along with their yearly clinical breast exam, to protect their health,” Dr. Amler said. “Today, thanks to early detection and treatment advances, women are surviving breast cancer and living longer, healthier lives. When breast cancer is found early, 97 percent of the cases can be effectively treated.”

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related death among women in New York State, after lung cancer. On average, more than 14,000 women in New York State are newly diagnosed with breast cancer, and more than 2,800 women die from the disease each year.

Although the causes of breast cancer are still unknown, the following factors may increase a woman’s risk for breast cancer:

- Advancing age
- Having a first menstrual period at a young age
- Starting menopause at an older age
- Never giving birth or delayed giving birth to first child until age 30 or older
- Not breastfeeding

- Having a personal or family history (on the mother's or father's side of the family) of breast cancer, or carrying certain gene mutations such as BRCA 1 or BRCA 2
- Being overweight or obese
- Drinking alcoholic beverages (The level of risk rises as the amount of alcohol consumed rises)
- Being sedentary
- Having a history of radiation exposure to the chest
- Taking hormone replacement therapy for an extended period of time.

Having one of these risk factors does not mean that you will be diagnosed with breast cancer. Many women who are diagnosed with breast cancer do not have any risk factors or unusual symptoms. Women who are concerned about their risk of breast cancer should talk to their health care provider. Women with a personal or family history of breast cancer might also consider genetic counseling.

Although there is still much to be learned about the causes of breast cancer, there are many ways men and women can live a healthy lifestyle and help improve outcomes related to cancer. These include not smoking and avoiding second-hand smoke, making healthy food choices, getting regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, and getting recommended cancer screenings.

The New York State Department of Health funds Cancer Services Program Partnerships statewide to provide access to breast and cervical cancer screenings for eligible uninsured women, as well as colorectal cancer screening for men and women aged 50 and over. Additional services include clinical breast examinations, mammograms, diagnostic testing if results are abnormal, and referrals to treatment. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact the Cancer Services Program of Putnam County at 845-808-1335.

There are other programs statewide that offer support or legal services to women with breast cancer and their families. You can visit <http://www.nyhealth.gov/nysdoh/cancer/center/partnerships/> or call 1-866-442-CANCER (2262) to locate a genetic counselor, legal services and breast cancer support programs in your community.

For more information about breast cancer, visit [http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/basic\\_info/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/basic_info/index.htm)