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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**PUTNAM COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
HOSTS TWO PUBLIC EVENTS IN RECOGNITION OF WORLD AIDS DAY**

Brewster, NY – Tuesday, December 1, is World AIDS Day, a day set aside to increase awareness of the magnitude of the HIV/AIDS epidemic around the world and a time to remember loved ones who have died as a result of AIDS-related illnesses. To commemorate this international observance, the Putnam County Department of Health is offering free rapid HIV testing and counseling on Tuesday, December 1, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at 1 Geneva Road, Brewster, NY. HIV results take just 20 minutes and no appointment is necessary.

On Friday, December 4, in collaboration with Westchester Medical Center, a Teen Health Day for individuals ages 13 to 24 will be held at the Carmel Fire Department, 94 Gleneida Avenue, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Teen Health Day will offer free and confidential services including HIV testing, STD screening, Hepatitis C testing, pregnancy testing and mental health and substance abuse referrals. Several other community organizations will be participating in the event to provide education and answer questions.

Although new technologies have been developed in the fight against AIDS, such as rapid HIV testing, and new treatments have slowed the progression of HIV to AIDS, the disease remains a major health threat both in the U.S. and worldwide. People with HIV are living longer, healthier, more productive lives, but there is still no vaccine or cure. The only way for an individual to know if he or she has HIV is to be tested.

“Early diagnosis and prompt, appropriate treatment can make the difference in quality and length of life,” said Allen Beals, M.D., Commissioner of Health, “and it is also the key to protecting others from becoming infected.”

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention in Atlanta estimates that 1.2 million individuals in the United States are living with HIV and one in eight of those infected do not know they are HIV positive. Many adults report not being tested for HIV because they do not see themselves as at risk. Prevention efforts have helped keep the rates of new infections stable in recent years, but the opportunity for infection increases as more people live with the disease. Getting tested is a first step towards prevention.

For more information about HIV or Hepatitis C testing, or disease education and prevention, contact the Health Department at (845) 808-1390.

The mission of the Putnam County Department of Health is to improve and protect the health of our community, made up 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.gov or visit our social media sites on Facebook at www.facebook.com/putnamhealth , www.facebook.com/RunWalkPutnam, www.instagram.com/PutnamHealthNY , and Twitter @PutnamHealthNY.

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