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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**PUTNAM COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
RECOGNIZES WORLD AIDS DAY**

Brewster, NY – Sunday, December 1, is World AIDS Day, a day set aside to increase awareness of the magnitude of the HIV/AIDS epidemic around the world. To commemorate this international observance, the Putnam County Department of Health is offering special hours on Tuesday, December 3, from 12 to 5 p.m., for free, rapid HIV testing and counseling at 121 Main Street, in Brewster, NY. Free testing for STDs and Hepatitis C will be available at the same time. HIV and Hep C results take just 20 minutes. A raffle will be held and light refreshments will be served. No appointment is necessary.

Although new technologies have been developed in the fight against AIDS, such as a rapid HIV test, 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 the infection are living longer, healthier, more productive lives, but there is still no vaccine or cure.

“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 one in five infected people do not know they are HIV positive. Chances are they have never been tested because they do not believe they are 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.

For more information about HIV, STD, 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, 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 and Twitter @PutnamHealth.

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