



Concerning Our Health

Greetings from the Putnam County Department of Health

Since the Public Health Summit last spring, it has been “full steam ahead,” working with community partners, developing goals and measurable objectives for our Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). Submitted to NYSDOH in mid-November, the CHIP will serve as a formal guide. On-the-ground collaborations with community partners are ongoing, including work with POW’R Against Tobacco to end tobacco product sales in pharmacies. (See story on page 3.)

Other topics covered inside range from the common to the rare. Family members frequently impacted by the problem of addiction can find help through the County’s Pegasus Program, while two Powassan virus cases confirmed in Putnam highlight the need to emphasize prevention for patients. Both stories appear on page 2.

—Allen Beals, MD, JD, Commissioner of Health



APHA spotlight on PCDOH

The national spotlight was cast on the Putnam County Department of Health (PCDOH) in early November at the American Public Health Association’s 141st Annual Meeting and Exposition in Boston. PCDOH staff members Barbara Ilardi, MPA, CDN, and Kathleen Percacciolo, RN, BSN, were joined by Joanna Eisman, MPH, CHES, CPH, from Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health’s NYC-Long Island-Lower Tri-County Public Health Training Center (NYC-LI-LTC PHTC), for an oral presentation. They were



From left, PCDOH staff Kathy Percacciolo and Barbara Ilardi, and Joanna Eisman from Columbia University, presented at APHA.

invited to speak on “Moving toward accreditation: A local health department’s success with strategic planning supported by a PHTC,” as part of a session on linking public health teaching and practice.

The PCDOH partnered with Columbia’s PHTC in September 2011. In March of the following year the decision was made to pursue national accreditation. An organizational self-assessment revealed that there were training gaps in strategic planning ability and the Columbia center brought in an expert to prepare the staff and facilitate the planning process.

Continued on page 2.

MAPP comes to Lower Hudson Valley

Chronic disease and mental health remain top issues

For the first time in the Lower Hudson Valley area, a health department has used “MAPP” to formulate its Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). It happened right here in Putnam County, facilitated by the PCDOH.

MAPP, which stands for Mobilizing Partners for Action through Planning and Partnerships, is a dynamic, “best-practice” process comprising a series of assessments. The community asset survey, deployed widely throughout the county from April through August, both online and by paper, was accompanied by the group assessment “Forces of Change,” conducted last May at the third

annual Public Health Summit. Forces of Change is a group exercise which zeroes in on the changing environment and how it is likely to affect health systems and care. All results have been collected and analyzed, along with input from focus groups and meetings with special populations. Additional data analysis included an epidemiological review of health data statistics at the state

and local level; and survey results from “Many Voices One Valley,” a quality of life survey conducted by the Marist College Institute for Public Opinion, and two “Live Healthy Putnam” nutrition, physical activity and mental health surveys. Finally, a comprehensive review of the local public health system was conducted internally by the PCDOH.

With all four assessment pieces completed, chronic diseases and mental health have solidly emerged as the top two concerns.

The written CHIP document, complete with measurable objectives and timelines, was submitted to the New York State Department of Health in November and is available online at www.putnamcountyny.com/health/data/

The MAPP process was developed by NACCHO (National Association of County & City Health Officials), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Presently considered optional by the NYS Department of Health for formulating the mandated CHIP, the technique is recommended for health departments, like Putnam County’s, that are seeking national accreditation.

Two Powassan cases confirmed in Putnam

During October the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) notified the PCDOH that two Putnam residents had been positively confirmed for the tick-borne illness Powassan (POW) virus.

POW virus is transmitted through the same vector that carries Lyme disease, the black-legged (deer) tick *Ixodes scapularis*. However, the POW virus can be transmitted in as little as 15 minutes. Signs and symptoms of POW infection can include fever, headache, vomiting and generalized weakness. These usually progress to meningo-encephalitis, with possible altered mental status, seizures, aphasia, paresis, movement disorders, or cranial nerve palsies. There is a 10 to 15 percent fatality rate in reported cases, with many survivors suffering long-term neurological damage. People with severe POW illness need hospitalization for respiratory support, intravenous fluids, or medications to reduce encephalitis.

POW virus is significantly less common than the Lyme bacterium. Since 2001, New York State has reported 16 known cases of POW; 5 of these were Putnam County residents. A re-

cent study in the 7 Hudson Valley counties found that Putnam had the highest rate of POW virus in ticks. Still, the rate is low at only 3.84 percent of ticks. The research was conducted by the NYSDOH in collaboration with the Carey Institute of Ecosystem Studies, based in Millbrook, N.Y.

Named after the municipality Powassan, in Ontario, Canada, where it was first reported, this tick-borne illness underscores again the importance

For additional info or to discuss Powassan testing:

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of encouraging patients to take the proper precautions, including application of an insect repellent containing DEET (N, N-diethyl-metoluamide), protec-

tive clothing and thorough “tick checks.”

For more information about POW virus and other tick-borne diseases, call the Putnam County Department of Health at (845) 808-1390 or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/powassan/

Pegasus Program helps family members living with addiction

Drug and alcohol dependency casts a wide shadow beyond the person struggling with addiction. It impacts the entire family, and the youngest sometimes suffer the most. To assist these children and their families, the Putnam County Youth Bureau offers a free, confidential program called the Pegasus Program, for children ages six to fourteen, who have a parent or family member suffering from alcoholism or other drug dependency.

For over 25 years, the Putnam County Pegasus Program has helped children better understand addiction and dependency as a disease, while teaching effective coping skills. Group support is a valuable tool, helping young participants fully understand they are not alone and that others also face similar problems. The atmosphere is fun, complete with activities, games and new friendships. The group is facilitated by a licensed social worker, Adriene Iasoni-Aull, LMSW, and pre-registration is required.

For more information or to register, please call Ms. Iasoni-Aull at 845-808-1600, ext. 46126, or email: adriene.iasoni@putnamcountyny.gov

Sleep insufficiency common, more prevalent in NYS

Sleep problems, often preventable, are linked with numerous health problems—chronic diseases, mental disorders, health-risk behaviors, limitations of daily functioning, injury and mortality, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has tracked how frequently sleep insufficiency problems occur.

In the first prevalence study from 2011, based on data from 12 states, including New York, researchers found 37.9 percent of the population had reported unintentionally falling asleep during the day at least once in the preceding 30 days, and 4.7 nodded off or fell asleep while driving. Approximately 35 percent reported less than 7 hours of sleep in a 24-hour period. New York State numbers were slightly more problematic in two of the three categories: 40.7 percent reported less than the minimum recommendations of 7 hours of daily sleep and 38.9 percent unintentionally fell asleep. Only the percentage of those nodding off while driving were better in New York—3.9 percent reported this concern, versus 4.7 from the 12 states.

Scientists don't fully agree on why sleep is so important, but new research adds to the theory of a cleaning process that goes on in the brain between the interstitial space and the cerebrospinal fluid. The study was done with mice, but the University of Rochester Medical Center researchers noted the same process occurs in dogs and baboons, so it is likely in humans as well.

Sources:

CDC. Unhealthy Sleep-Related Behaviors—12 States, 2009. *MMWR* 2011; 60: 233-42.

L. Xie et al. Sleep Drive Metabolite Clearance from the Adult Brain, *Science*, 342, 373-377 (2013).

APHA spotlight, continued from page 1

The annual APHA meeting attracts more than 10,000 national and international physicians, administrators, nurses, educators, researchers, epidemiologists and related health specialists. The five-day program addresses current and emerging health science, policy, and practice issues in an effort to prevent disease and promote health.

Tobacco sales in pharmacies continue; *POW'R* moves forward

Sixty-two percent of Putnam residents believe pharmacies should not sell tobacco products, according to a recent 2013 telephone survey, funded by POW'R Against Tobacco. Despite this, Putnam County legislators citing the issue of excessive government interference at their October 2nd meeting, voted down, by a 7 to 2 margin, legislation that would have banned the sale of tobacco products in pharmacies in Putnam County.

The telephone survey had been

conducted by Baruch College Survey Research from June 27 through August 13, 2013, for the four-county POW'R (Putnam, Orange, Westchester, and Rockland) community partnership, dedicated to reducing the prevalence of tobacco use and marketing. Data collectors polled a random sample of 402 adults in Putnam County, along with conducting similar interviews in five other counties, including Orange County. Westchester and Rockland counties will be surveyed in 2014.

In addition to the percentage of residents concerned specifically about tobacco sales in pharmacies, **55 percent of the Putnam residents polled reported that they would also favor a policy that limits the number of stores in general that could sell tobacco in their community.** Only 29 percent opposed such a policy. POW'R continues its efforts to build support for the pharmacy bill, as well as point-of-sale legislation specifically crafted to protect children.

NYSIIS participation continues to rise to 87.7%; Hudson Valley counties lag

Provider participation in the NYS Immunization Information System (NYSIIS) continues to move upward. As of July 2012, participation statewide was 87.7 percent for children (outside of NYC), who are less than six years of age and have had 2 or more immunizations. This is in comparison to 80.1 percent in September 2010. Other NYSIIS numbers include: 52.5 million immunizations; 4.1 million patients; 12,364 individual users; 3,360 healthcare provider practices; 2,406 schools; 1,161 pharmacies, and 21 health plans. More than 1.4 million blood lead tests are also now available through NYSIIS (see box below).

A geographic profile of NYS shows highest participation in NYSIIS in the Central New York Region, followed by the Capital District Region, due in part to the program's earlier launch in these areas. The Lower Hudson Valley and Long Island regions lag behind the rest of the state.

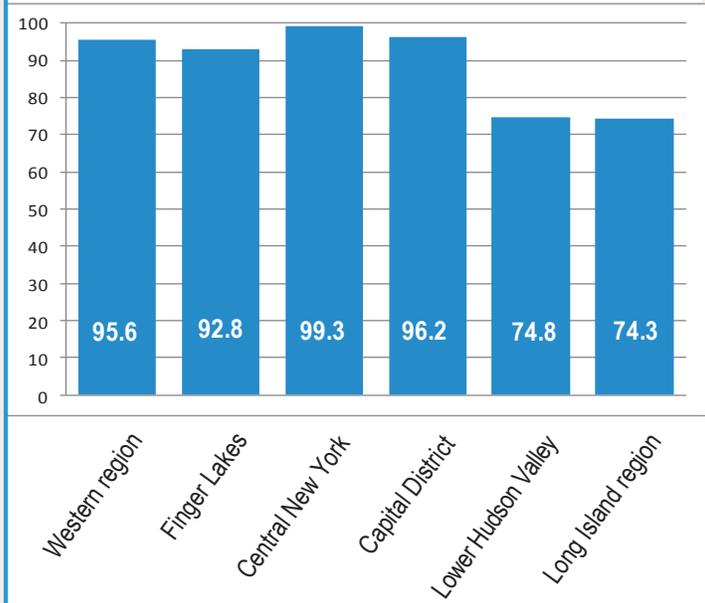
NYSIIS + LeadWeb = Better Protection for Kids

The NYSIIS system has also been enhanced to include linkages to the NYS's blood lead poisoning prevention program and the statewide childhood blood lead registry called LeadWeb. As of July 2012, 1.4 million blood lead tests were available through the NYSIIS system.

The blood lead module in NYSIIS allows users to view, manage and add blood lead level test results. Providers can receive approval to report BLLs that are obtained in their practice using an approved device.

For information: 518-402-7600, or email: lppp@health.state.ny.us.

NYSIIS PARTICIPATION RATES BY REGION



The purpose of the mandated NYSIIS system is to end duplication of vaccines and reduce costs, consolidate and provide the most up-to-date records, and streamline physician record-keeping. Data from providers' electronic medical records or clinical billing systems can be electronically transferred to NYSIIS, and patient specific reminders for recommended vaccines and doses, complete with mailing labels, can be generated. Other benefits include easy immunization record printouts for daycares, schools, camps and colleges, and tracking of vaccine inventory. One additional reason to comply is to access and report blood lead levels through the NYSIIS linkage with LeadWeb (see box at left).

For further information:
PCDOH Immunization program at 845-808-1390, or nysiis@health.state.ny.us or 518-473-2839



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And the envelope please...LHP wins Putnam County Service Network Award

Live Healthy Putnam coalition members show off their Putnam Community Service Network Award certificates at a recent planning meeting for the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).

Seated from left, around the table, from foreground, are: Susan Schefflein, United Way; Diane Moore, Reality Check, Youth Bureau; Janeen Cunningham, Youth Bureau; Dianne Olsen and Dan Feeser, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Putnam County; Maureen Kenney, POW'R Against Tobacco; Michelle Martine, Child Advocacy Center of Putnam County; and Riki Peterson, Catholic Charities Community Services.

Standing from left are: Didi Raxworthy, POW'R Tobacco Cessation Center; Laurie Ford, Kidz Country Day Care; Denise Hogan, POW'R Against Tobacco; Allen Beals, MD, Commissioner of Health; Barbara Ilardi, Putnam County Department of Health; Grace Beltran, Open Door Family Medical Centers; Erin Ray Pascaretti, Karen Yates and Kris Boyle, Putnam County Department of Health; Anne Brandon, DC, chiropractor and yoga instructor; Loretta Molinari, Visiting Nurse Services of Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess Counties, and Susana Dealmeida, Putnam Hospital Center.



Live Healthy Putnam is the umbrella organization for chronic disease prevention in the County. It was launched in 2007 to promote the voluntary ban on trans fats in Putnam County restaurants. Today, the group has grown to include more than two dozen organizations from around the county. The coalition, nominated for the award by Susan Schefflein from the United Way, was honored at the 28th Annual PCSN Awards Breakfast in September.