



Concerning Our Health

Putnam Behavioral Health Group wins Million Dollar Grant

Putnam Family and Community Services (PFCS), the largest, private non-profit agency providing behavioral health services in Putnam County, is one of eight agencies in the state to receive funding through a \$7.96 million grant from the Partnership Innovation for Older Adults Program. The organization will be establishing a new community-based project to identify at-risk adults, 55 years of age and older, whose survival in the community is at risk due to a mental health or substance use concern. Joining them in this work is the Putnam County Office for Senior Resources (OSR) and the National Council on Alcoholism & Other Drug Dependencies/Putnam (NCADD-Putnam). This “triple partnership” will further provide interim treatment and services, before linking them to the appropriate, ongoing, community-based treatment and other needed services.

PFCS has a long history of working in the community with the aging population, which has been increasing over the past decade. Equally important, the organization has enjoyed a long-standing working relationship with these two partner agencies. It has provided mental health and alcohol/substance use treatment services to lower Hudson Valley, New York and eastern Connecticut residents since 1997, when Putnam County privatized its mental health services. PFCS staff includes psychiatrists, masters level clinicians, credentialed alcohol and drug abuse counselors, nurses, care managers, and family and

Continued on page 2.

Putnam’s Prescribing Contributes to Antibiotic Resistance

Every winter during cold and flu season, thousands of Putnam residents leave their doctors’ offices armed with a prescription for antibiotics. For many, the medication will offer no relief and only add to the growing problem of antibiotic resistance.

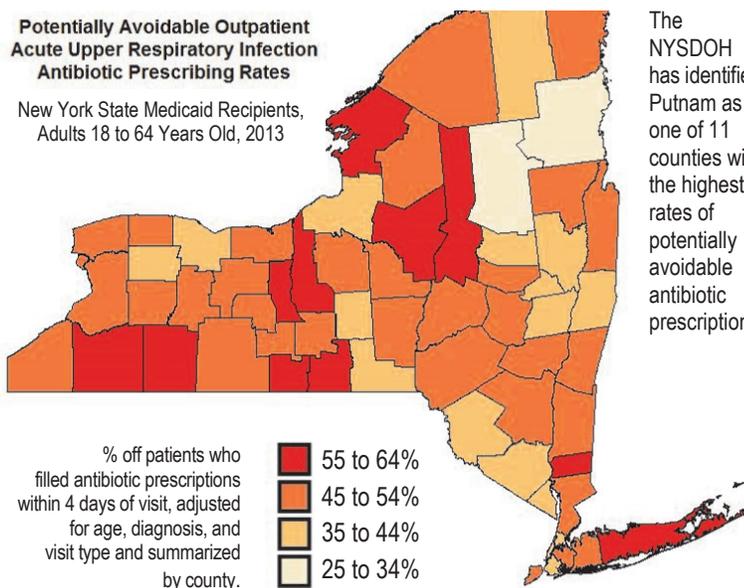
Physicians and public health officials

have known about this problem for decades, but there was little data to accurately describe the extent of the problem. Instead the literature focused on specific age groups or specific diagnoses. Last May, a comprehensive report from the CDC found that **nearly one third of all antibiotic prescriptions issued in the**

United States during ambulatory care visits are unnecessary. This finding was calculated based on 184, 032 visits sampled from the 2010-2011 National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey and National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey. An estimated 506 antibiotic

Potentially Avoidable Outpatient Acute Upper Respiratory Infection Antibiotic Prescribing Rates

New York State Medicaid Recipients, Adults 18 to 64 Years Old, 2013



The NYSDOH has identified Putnam as one of 11 counties with the highest rates of potentially avoidable antibiotic prescriptions.

Continued on page 3.

STD Update: Syphilis Up in Putnam

Syphilis cases have spiked in Putnam, as they have across the U.S. While the number of confirmed cases is low in comparison to chlamydia numbers, the abrupt rise is still cause for serious concern. Year-to-date figures for Putnam in the first ten months of 2015 compared to 2014 show an increase of 150%—from 6 cases to 15.

Making a negative situation worse is the ongoing nationwide shortage of two of the medications used to treat syphilis. The FDA announced a Bicillin LA shortage last April, which continues today. In September, the FDA further announced a shortage of Procaine Penicillin G injectable (IM), used to treat congenital syphilis. Penicillin G is the only recommended treatment for pregnant women with or exposed to the disease. If needed, alternative treatments are listed in the CDC 2015 Treatment Guidelines, available online at www.cdc.gov/std/tg2015/. Additionally from the same page, a free app is available for Android and Apple devices, which combines information from the treatment guidelines as well as MMWR updates.

Continued on page 2.

Community Organization “Drug Crisis in our Backyard” Opens Office in Carmel

Drug Crisis in our Backyard, a non-profit community action organization, opened a new street-front office at 16 Fair Street in Carmel, a short walk from Carmel High School. The organization was started in 2012 by Susan and Steven Salomone, and Carol and Lou Christiansen, after they lost their sons to a battle with drug addiction.

Their mission is to promote awareness and provide education, resources and support to individuals and families affected by drug addiction. Students have been stopping by daily after school to ask questions and pick up informational literature.

Numerous organizations, including Putnam/Northern Westchester Women’s Resource Center and Arms Acres, stopped by to welcome and wish good luck to Executive Director Susan Salomone.

Office hours vary, Monday through Friday. For more information, the phone number is 845-842-1212.



From left to right: Barbara Iardi, Putnam County Department of Health; colleagues from Drug Crisis in Our Backyard, Deputy Director Ray Dorritie, advisory committee members Eileen New and Debbie Soravilla, and Executive Director Susan Salomone; Patrice Wallace-Moore, Arms Acres; Erin Pascaretti, Putnam County Department of Health; and Jesse Zayas, Northern Westchester/ Putnam Women’s Resource Center.

Million Dollar Grant to Increase Services for Elderly,

continued from front page

peer advocates.

Telehealth technology will also play a role in the project with the use of a home monitoring system for those seniors identified as having the most risk and who could benefit from such support. The American Psychological Association issued guidelines in 2013 for the use of telecommunications technologies in the provision of psychological services. This evidence-based practice is fortunately growing, as telepsychology in general has the potential to increase access to care. In the mental health sector this is a key challenge.

PFCS, the lead agency, provides the mental health component of the partnership and will hire and oversee the necessary staff with the assistance of NCADD-Putnam, which will lend its expertise to hire a part-time recovery coach. Other new staff will include a full-time Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), and a part-time care manager, nurse and consulting psychiatrist. All team members will be available to provide assessment or services in the community.

Seniors can be screened and referred from multiple points in the community—during home visits, in physicians’ offices or at the OSR’s senior centers throughout the county. The OSR will also provide access to their other senior-related services such as health insurance information and counseling. It is projected that 150 individuals will be served each of the five years, and face-to-face encounters or contacts will number in the thousands annually.

The program is expected to start taking referrals early in the new year. Stay tuned for further details.

Free STD services available

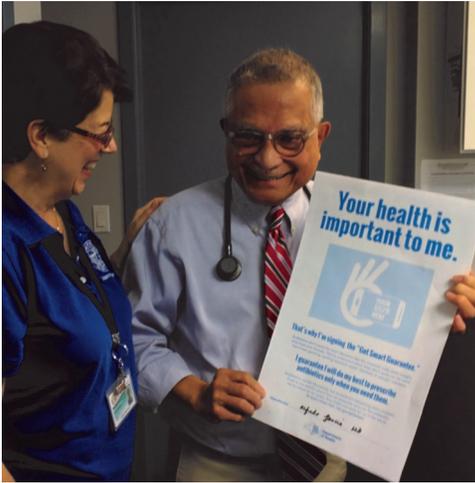
Free and sliding scale STD testing and treatment services are available at the Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) Open Door Brewster. These services are provided through a contractual arrangement with the Putnam County Department of Health (PCDOH), which launched them onsite in 2012. The PCDOH continues to do only free, confidential and anonymous, HIV testing at its main office at 1 Geneva Road. The remaining STD services are provided at Open Door, 155 Main Street, Suite 101, in the village of Brewster. For further information, please call 845-279-6999.

Syphilis up in Putnam, continued from front page

Meanwhile all STDs continue to rise in Putnam and nationwide. In October, the CDC announced that for 2015 the combined rates of reported chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis had hit an historic all-time high, blaming in part cutbacks in public health system funding for STD clinics.

Fortunately, the Putnam County Department of Health has received approval to work with the State University of Albany’s School of Public Health and create a multi-faceted educational approach to combatting Putnam’s rising STD rates. A “Public Health Leader of Tomorrow (PHLOT) intern from the university will be brought on board next spring to develop the project.

Get Smart About Antibiotics Week: Putnam Docs Take the Pledge



Alfredo Garcia, MD, left, Putnam Pediatrics of Boston Children's Health Physicians, and Interim Health Commissioner Dr. Michael Nesheiwat were among the docs signing the "Get Smart Guarantee" pledge during Get Smart About Antibiotics Week in November. Health department nursing staff took to the road for the international observance, visiting more than 30 physicians' offices throughout Putnam County to continue the conversations about reducing antibiotic resistance. The team brought posters and special prescription pads to help educate patients about the appropriate use of antibiotics. Physicians took the pledge to prescribe antibiotics only when there is evidence of bacterial infection and not to be influenced by the pressure patients often try to exert.



Search continues for permanent Health Commissioner

While Michael J. Nesheiwat, MD, continues in the role of Interim Commissioner, the search to find a permanent leader is ongoing. However, in today's health care environment and this geographic area, it is an arduous task. Last month the Health Commissioner in Dutchess County resigned his position after less than a year on the job.

Nominees are held to high and somewhat unique standards. The first requirement is a medical degree. Public health experience and a degree in public health are also important, but these requirements can be waived by the New York State Department of Health under certain circumstances.

Medical and public health knowledge is not all that is needed. Commissioners must take up social, economic and political challenges that are different from those involved in practicing medicine. Protecting the health and safety of county residents requires commissioners to exercise powers under New York State Public Health Law and lead local agencies to help communities respond to disasters and protect against environmental hazards.

For more details, or to refer a candidate, please contact the Putnam County Personnel Department .

CDC Warns about Top 18 Antibiotic-Resistant Threats

In 2013, CDC published a report outlining the top 18 drug-resistant threats to the United States. These threats are categorized based on level of concern, with urgent being the most dangerous and requiring the highest level of monitoring and prevention. See table below.

All categories require attention. Threat-specific CDC activities are tailored to meet the epidemiology of the infectious agent and to address gaps in the ability to detect resistance and to protect against infections.

Hazard level: Urgent

Clostridium Difficile (CDIFF)	Neisseria gonorrhoeae
Carbapenem-Resistant Enterobacteriaceae (CRE)	

Hazard level: Serious

Multidrug-Resistant Acinetobacter	Drug-Resistant Non-Typhoidal Salmonella
Drug-Resistant Campylobacter	Drug-Resistant Salmonella Serotype Typhi
Fluconazole-Resistant Candida	Drug-Resistant Shigella
Extended Spectrum Enterobacteriaceae (ESBL)	Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)
Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococcus (VRE)	Drug-Resistant Streptococcus Pneumoniae
Multidrug-Resistant Pseudomonas Aeruginosa	Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis

Hazard level: Concerning

Vancomycin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus	Clindamycin-Resistant Group B Streptococcus
Erythromycin-Resistant Group A Streptococcus	

Putnam's Prescribing Rates, continued from front page

prescriptions per 1000 population were written annually, and of those, 353 prescriptions were estimated to be appropriate prescriptions.

A second study released from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Pew Charitable Trusts in October 2016 described prescribing patterns for ear and sinus infections, and sore throats. They found that **only 52 percent of patients were given the recommended narrow-spectrum "first-line" medication.** The others were given broad-spectrum antibiotics, unnecessary and inadvertently contributing to resistance. Adults were much more likely than children to receive the wrong antibiotic. More than 60 percent of adults diagnosed with strep throat were prescribed the broad-spectrum type, not recommended by medical guidelines, compared to only 40 percent of children.



Inside this issue

Putnam Group Wins Million Dollar Grant	1
Putnam Prescribing and Antibiotic Resistance	1
Syphilis Up in Putnam	1
Drug Crisis in Our Backyard Opens in Carmel	2
Get Smart About Antibiotics Week	3
CDC's Top 18 Antibiotic Threats	3
Search Continues for Health Commissioner	3

Putnam County Administration

MaryEllen Odell, County Executive
 Michael Nesheiwat, MD, Interim Commissioner of Health
 Robert Morris, PE, MPH, Director, Environmental Health

Editorial Board

Kristine Boyle, CDN, CPH, CHWC, Health Educator
 Susan Hoffner, MPH, MCHES, Health Educator
 Barbara Ilardi, MPA, CDN, CPH, Supervising Public Health Educator
 Kathy Percacciolo, RN, BSN, Supervising Public Health Nurse

Community Partner Contributors

Bruce Kelly, Esq, Coalition Coordinator
 Putnam Communities That Care Coalition
 National Council on Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependencies, Putnam
 Diane E. Russo, MS, CASAC, Chief Executive Officer
 Putnam Family & Community Services
 Susan Salomone, President
 Drug Crisis In Our Backyard

Layout and Design

Susan Hoffner, MPH, MCHES, Health Educator

Tell patients: More safe options for medication disposal

Earlier this fall, a seventh MedReturn box opened in Putnam County. Located in Patterson Town Hall, the box offers free disposal of old, or unused medications. Individuals can drop off—no questions asked—any prescription or over-the-counter medicines, prescription ointments, any kind of vitamins, and pet medications as well. The box is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, and is located in the main lobby of the town hall building, 1142 Route 311.

Unused and unattended medications often fall into the wrong hands with the potential for prescription medicine abuse. **In fact, nearly 59.8% of opioid pain medication abuse results from drugs obtained from a friend or relative, with or without their permission.** Flushing or pouring medications down the drain is not a good solution because it harms the water supply.

Putnam's Communities That Care (CTC) Coalition partnered with the Patterson Rotary and the Putnam County Sheriff's Office to install the new MedReturn box, making it seven boxes in the county, covering every municipality.

Medication Take-Back Days are also held twice a year at the Putnam Hospital Center,

organized by Putnam County's Communities That Care (CTC) coalition, Putnam's National Council on Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependencies (NCADD), the Putnam County Sheriff's Department and the health department. (No sharps, IV bags, liquids, lotions, aerosol cans or hydrogen peroxide are accepted either at the events or in the MedReturn boxes.)



MedReturn boxes offer a safe, confidential way to dispose of unwanted medications. Now more convenient than ever, there are boxes located throughout the county.

MedReturn Box Locations and Times

Brewster Motor Vehicles Department 1 Geneva Road Lobby, near elevator	Kent Lakes Kent Police Department 25 Sybil Crossing Lobby, left of entrance
Carmel Sheriff's Department 3 County Center Lobby, near restrooms	Patterson Town Hall 1142 Route 311 Lobby
Carmel Police Department 60 McAlpin Avenue Lobby, right of entrance	Putnam Valley Town Hall 265 Oscawana Lake Road Hallway, by assessor's office
Cold Spring Philipstown Town Hall 238 Main Street Across from town clerk window	

Carmel and Kent locations open 24/7.

Other locations open weekdays from at least 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Some locations open earlier, or close later.