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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**PCDOH Offers Free HIV Testing on June 27**

BREWSTER, NY—National HIV Testing Day is an annual event to encourage people of all ages to “Take the Test, Take Control.” Nearly 1.2 million people in the U.S. are living with HIV, according to estimates from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention in Atlanta, and approximately one in eight of them do not know they are infected.

“Early diagnosis allows us to begin treatment promptly,” said Michael Nesheiwat, MD, Putnam County’s Interim Commissioner of Health. “This can make a big difference in the patient’s outcome and can help limit the spread of the virus.”

To encourage HIV testing, the Putnam County Department of Health, in partnership with Hudson Valley Community Services and Planned Parenthood, will be offering free rapid HIV testing and counseling at three sites in Putnam County on Monday, June 27: Health Department, 1 Geneva Road, Brewster, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; a mobile testing van at Putnam Family & Community Services, 1816 Route 6, in Carmel, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., and a testing van at Hudson Valley Community Services, 46 Oscawana Lake Road, in Putnam Valley, from 12 noon to 5 p.m. Privacy and confidentiality are ensured. No appointments are necessary and results are ready in 20 minutes. Free condoms, giveaways and educational information will be available at all sites.

HIV can affect anyone regardless of age, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity or gender. In 2014, 22 percent of all new HIV diagnoses were among youth aged 13 to 24 years of age.

However, people aged 50 and older have many of the same HIV risk factors as younger people, but may be less aware of their risk. In 2012, people aged 55 and older accounted for 24 percent of those living with HIV infection in the U.S.

People with HIV and AIDS are living longer, healthier and more productive lives. New research is promising, but there is still no vaccine or cure for HIV. While safe sex is considered primary prevention, early diagnosis is called “secondary prevention” in public health terms, and early diagnosis saves lives too. Unfortunately, older Americans are more likely than youth to be diagnosed with HIV infection later in the course of their disease, which means delayed treatment, possibly more immune-system damage and shorter survival.

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

The Health Department’s mission is to improve and protect the health of the Putnam County community, composed 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 the PCDOH website at [www.putnamcountyny.com/health](http://www.putnamcountyny.com/health) or visit the social media sites on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/putnamhealth](http://www.facebook.com/putnamhealth) and Twitter @PutnamHealthNY.

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