



# Department of Health

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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

BREWSTER, NY—This year annual National HIV Testing Day encourages people of all ages to “Test your way. Do it today.” As in previous years, the main message is to take control of your health and find out if you may have the human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, which over time usually causes AIDS. In early stages a person often feels fine. In fact, approximately one in seven Americans infected do not know they are carrying the virus. In total, nearly 1.1 million people in the U.S. are living with HIV, according to estimates from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention in Atlanta.

“With early diagnosis, we can begin treatment sooner,” said Michael Nesheiwat, MD, Putnam County’s Interim Commissioner of Health. “This can make a big difference in the patient’s outcome. It can save lives and can help limit the spread of the virus.”

To encourage HIV testing, the Putnam County Department of Health, in partnership with Westchester Medical Center and Planned Parenthood, will be offering free rapid HIV testing and counseling on Tuesday, June 27. Mobile vans will be located at the Carmel Fire Department, 94 Gleneida Avenue, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, and at Brewster Towne Plaza, 1620 Route 22 (near Value Village), from 12 noon to 6 p.m. Testing will also be offered at the main health department office, 1 Geneva Road, Brewster, from 10 a.m. to 2 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 2015, 22 percent of all new HIV diagnoses in the U.S. were among youth aged 13 to 24 years of age. 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 2014, people aged 50 and older accounted for 17 percent of those living with HIV infection.

Today 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. Safe sex is the best “primary prevention,” but early testing and diagnosis saves lives too. Testing and early results are part of what is called “secondary prevention” in public health terms. Older Americans are more likely than youth to be tested later in the course of their disease. This means delayed treatment, often more health problems and shorter survival. Despite medical advances, HIV/AIDS is still a significant cause of death for some age groups. It was the 8<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death for those from 25 to 34 years of age in 2014 in the U.S.

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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