



MaryEllen Odell
County Executive

Department of Health

1 Geneva Road, Brewster, New York 10509
(845) 808-1390



Michael J. Nesheiwat, M.D.
Interim Commissioner of Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: November 17, 2017

Contact: Barbara Iardi, Public Information Officer, (845) 808-1390

Putnam County Department of Health Hosts FREE HIV Testing on World AIDS Day

BREWSTER, NY—December 1 is World AIDS Day, a date set aside to increase awareness of the magnitude of the HIV/AIDS epidemic around the world and a time to remember loved ones who have died as a result of AIDS-related illnesses. To commemorate this annual international observance, the Putnam County Department of Health is offering free rapid HIV testing and education on Friday, December 1, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at 1 Geneva Road, Brewster, NY. Results take just 20 minutes and no appointment is necessary. Testing for Hepatitis C, another viral infection that can be spread through contact with infected blood, will also be available at the same time.

Although new treatments and technologies have slowed the progression of HIV to AIDS, the disease remains a major health problem both in the U.S. and worldwide. Advances such as rapid HIV testing and anti-viral drugs allow people with HIV to live long, healthy, and productive lives. However there is still no vaccine or cure. Early diagnosis is the key to early treatment. The only way for an individual to know if he or she has HIV is to be tested.

“Early, appropriate treatment can make all the difference in the quality and length of life for someone infected with the HIV virus,” said Interim Commissioner of Health Michael Nesheiwat, M.D. “Early testing and diagnosis is not just important for an individual’s health, but also from the public health standpoint of protecting others.”

Many adults are not tested for HIV because they do not feel sick and they don’t think they are “at risk.” However, in the early stages of HIV infection, a person may not show any illness. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention in Atlanta estimates that 1.1 million individuals

in the United States are living with HIV and one in seven of those infected do not know they are HIV positive. As more people live with the disease, the chance of becoming infected increases. Despite this, large scale prevention efforts have led to fewer new infections in recent years. Getting tested is a first step towards prevention.

For more information about HIV or Hepatitis C testing, or their prevention, contact the Health Department at (845) 808-1390.

The mission of the Putnam County Department of Health, nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), 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 our County website at www.putnamcountyny.com ; or visit our social media sites on Facebook at www.facebook.com/putnamhealth and Twitter @PutnamHealthNY.

###