



Concerning Our Health

Public Health Summit VII Draws Record Crowd to Focus on Health Equity

More than 84 public health partners from 48 different community agencies convened at Putnam Hospital Center last month for the seventh annual public health summit.

Unlike previous years, the 2017 event focused on a single issue, health equity, and how by building a culture of equity, rather than equality, community health can be improved. Organized by the Putnam County Department of Health (PCDOH) with support from Putnam Hospital Center (PHC), the event brought together community leaders, public health partners and residents to start a conversation about putting an equity “framework” into action.

Previous summit gatherings have taken a more task-oriented approach, focusing on the Community Health Improvement Plan, known simply as “the CHIP,” and its priority areas of preventing chronic disease and promoting mental health and reducing substance abuse. However, health funders and partners are realizing that the social determinants of health (SDOH) must be factored in first, if true community health improvement and reduction of health care costs are to be achieved.

Social factors determine a patient’s health as much as, maybe more than, what is passed on through a person’s genes. In fact, it is SDOH in part that account for the fact that the U.S. ranks 28 out of 43 developed nations in the world for life expectancy, despite spending significantly more money per person on health care.

The keynote address on health equity challenges in Putnam was presented by Andrea Beltran Ruggiero, senior director of care coordination and wellness at Open Door Family Medical Centers. Ms. Ruggiero reported how successful the federally qualified health center has been



County Executive MaryEllen Odell and Putnam Hospital Center President Peter Kelly were among community leaders who welcomed the crowd to the Public Health Summit VII.

not only in providing a “medical home” for patients, but also incorporating behavioral health integration specialists into their care plans. One example of this success has been the increased rate for depression screening with follow-up from 39 percent in 2013 to 69 percent so far in 2017. This was deemed a needed service for the Putnam population, given the County’s focus on addiction issues, suicide prevention and the high reported rates of binge drinking.

Another presentation by PCDOH epidemiologist Erin Pascaretti covered the collaborative *Continued on page 2.*

PCDOH staffers give testimony to NYS Senate on increasing tick-borne illnesses

Public health nurse Jean Ralston and epidemiologist Erin Pascaretti visited Albany last month to submit testimony before the New York State Senate on the impact that tick-borne illnesses are having in Putnam County.

They briefed legislators on the changing mix of tick-borne illnesses, while also calling attention to high case numbers in Putnam (Table 1, page 3). The county has ranked among the top five highest for Lyme disease incidence in New York State for the past five years (Table 2, page 3).



Testimony also pointed out the universal challenge of all health departments in compiling accurate Lyme disease case numbers. Patients presenting with an Erythema migrans (EM) rash do not require laboratory work, so these cases go uncounted

Continued on page 3.

“Health in All Policies” Approach Gains Traction in NYS

“Health in All Policies” is a collaborative approach that aims to integrate health considerations into policy making across all sectors to improve community health. It recognizes that a community’s health is linked with other societal issues that extend beyond health care and traditional public health activities, such as housing, transportation, and the natural and built (manmade) environments. Considering social determinants of health when providing clinical care helps to identify relevant issues and provide more comprehensive and ultimately successful care.

In January, Governor Cuomo called upon the state’s Public Health and Health Planning Council to spearhead this effort, which has been named “Health Across All Policies” in New York. The plan is to initially focus on creating age-friendly com-

munities and policies, before extending the effort more broadly.

While this approach has gained support in recent years, the idea is not new and can be traced back 35 years to the World Health Organization Declaration of Alma-Ata 1978, which noted that both health services and efforts to engage other sectors in the social, economic and political determinants of health are required to achieve significant health gains. Since then, support for putting this concept into action has come from a number of countries around the globe including Norway, Sweden, Thailand, Brazil and the European Union. Within the United States, work is being advanced by the California Health in All Policies Task Force, the Institute of Medicine, the Public Health Institute, the American Public Health Association, and now New York State.

Putnam Health Summit on Health Equity, *continued*



Far left: Interim Health Commissioner Michael J. Nesheiwat, MD; epidemiologist Erin Pascaretti; keynote speaker Andrea Beltran Ruggiero, Open Door Family Medical Centers, and Barbara Ilardi.

Left: Karen Yates (see “In Memoriam” below) distributes conference packets, with, from left, Mary McCormick, PCDOH, and Keiren Farquhar, current member of the Putnam Hospital Center Board and former coordinator of the Medical Reserve Corps.



In Memoriam: Karen Mateo Yates, 1975—2017

Recently she received recognition of this with her promotion to health education assistant.

Karen had an easy, winning smile and a wonderful sense of humor. She was an active member of all four accreditation committees: strategic planning, workforce development, communications, and quality improvement and performance management. Prior to working in the health education unit, she worked in the environmental health section. Additionally, Karen was the recording secretary for the Board of Health of Putnam County, which serves in an advisory capacity to the health commissioner.

A college fund has been established for her ten-year-old daughter Sarah Yates. Those wishing to contribute may contact interim health commissioner Michael J. Nesheiwat, MD, Putnam County Department of Health, 1 Geneva Road, Brewster, NY 10509, 845-808-1390.

This publication does not usually publish obituaries. But Karen Yates was not your typical health department employee. She worked for Putnam County for nearly two decades in the civil service position of a clerk, but she worked far beyond those responsibilities, and without complaint.



approach labeled “Health in All Policies.” (See related story above.) The second part of the summit consisted of viewing a series of clips from the acclaimed PBS documentary series “Unnatural Causes.” Each

Above: John Bourges, left, from the Vet 2 Vet Program, talks with Karl Rohde, director of Putnam County’s Veteran’s Service.

Below: Sandra Iberger, St. Christopher’s, left, and Lindsay Farrell, Open Door Family Medical Centers.

clip was preceded by provocative questions, and followed by an interactive discussion. Led by Barbara Ilardi, supervising public health educator at the health department, the session provided eye-opening statistics of our health care system and a segue for a subsequent health equity event mid-October called “Blueprint for Health Equity,” presented by HealthLinkNY.

Flu Vaccine: Not just protective against influenza

Influenza cases and cardiac deaths both peak in winter time. Many studies point to a temporal relationship between respiratory illness and acute myocardial infarction (AMI). The strongest association is with AMIs that follow within 3 days of influenza infection, but the relationship appears to last as long as one year. Many guidelines recommend administering flu shots for patients with cardiovascular disease, however vaccination rates in risk groups aged < 65 years remains low—in the range of only 30 percent.

Traditional secondary prevention strategies include smoking cessation, antihypertensive drugs and statins to improve the risk factors for coronary heart disease. Now with mounting evidence, influenza vaccination is being considered another secondary prevention strategy.

Influenza infection, coupled with atherosclerosis, may influence AMIs

through various mechanisms including tachycardia, hypoxia, acute inflammation, cytokine release, vasoconstriction,

EFFICACY OF ACCEPTED CORONARY INTERVENTIONS COMPARED WITH INFLUENZA VACCINATION

Intervention	Prevention	Efficacy rate (%)
Smoking cessation	Secondary	32-43
Statins	Secondary	19-30
Antihypertensive drugs	Secondary	17-25
Influenza vaccine	Secondary	15-45

Source: MacIntyre CR, Mahimbo A, Moa AM, et al. Heart 2016; 102:1953-1956.

effect on receptors, coronary plaque disruption and thrombogenesis.

If flu vaccine protects against AMIs, it is through preventing influenza, and in doing so preventing an AMI triggered by the mechanisms named above.

An additional protective effect of the vaccination is that it induces an antibody that cross-reacts with a human bradykinin receptor. It is believed that this may lead to increased levels of nitric oxide, enhancing myocardial oxygen use.

Putnam County E-Cigarette Policy Sets the Pace

While health officials continue the debate on electronic cigarettes, Putnam has proven itself ahead of other municipalities when it comes to protecting the adult and youth populations against the harms of all sources of nicotine. Early last year, the Putnam County legislature revised the County Code to expand its definition of smoking to include the use of E-cigarettes. Voting unanimously, they extended the County's Clean Indoor Air Act to include all vapor-producing devices. POW'R Against Tobacco, a community advocacy group, funded through the New York State Bureau of Tobacco Control, had been instrumental in efforts to educate about the legislation's importance.

Earlier this year, New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo stepped up efforts specifically aimed at protecting youth from the harm of E-cigarettes by banning their use on all public and private school grounds in New York State. This legislation bolsters Putnam's efforts by underscoring the dangers of nicotine in any form, particularly for youth, and by extending the ban to all school grounds including surrounding outdoor areas contained with a public or private pre-school, nursery school, elementary, or secondary school property or any vehicles used to transport children or school personnel.

Primary enforcement of the code pertaining to vaping, as with cigarette smoking, is the responsibility of the owner of the property. However, as with tobacco smoking, the Putnam County Department of Health can be notified to file a complaint.

PCDOH staffers submit testimony to NYS Senate, *continued*

because they are often not reported to the health department. The take-home message for physicians and the health department is to increase communication and awareness to capture this information.

Got Patients with EM Rashes?

No lab work may be necessary, but cases should still be reported to the health department.

Erythema migrans (EM) rash reporting forms are available online under "For Healthcare Providers" at

www.putnamcountyny.com/health/

	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Anaplasmosis	20	16	8	26	19	34	15	27	30	20
Babesiosis	19	17	23	25	15	18	8	3	6	1
Ehrlichiosis	10	4	8	4	2	1	2	7	4	6
Lyme	344	322	323	294	242	345	171	132	248	140
Powassan	0	0	1	3	0	0	1	1	0	1
Rocky Mt. Spotted Fever	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	NA

SOURCE: Putnam County Department of Health (DOH)

* NA =not available

	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Columbia	623.0	474.0	484.8	546.8	562.6
Greene	658.8	505.6	669.8	414.7	629.8
Putnam	323.7	324.2	295.2	242.2	346.0
Rensselaer	338.6	268.9	382.3	317.5	411.5
Washington	120.3	111.0	216.1	188.4	460.3
NYS-excluding NYC	65.1	51.9	60.9	47.6	64.9

SOURCE: Putnam County DOH; and New York State DOH Communicable Disease Annual Report

* Incidence rate per 100,000 Population, 2015-2011

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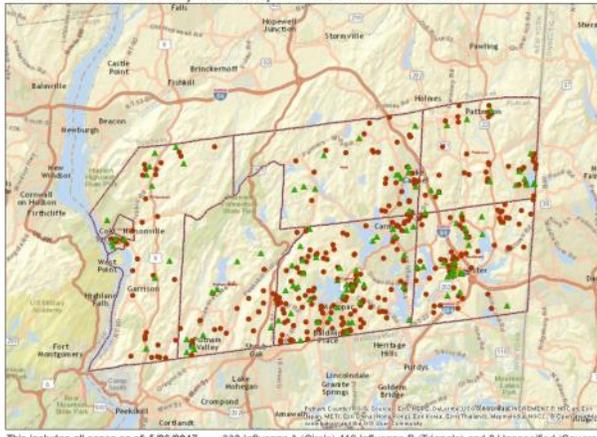
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Putnam Health Department: We Track Flu For You *County Flu Maps Return*

The PCDOH collects, compiles and analyzes information on influenza activity in Putnam County. When the viruses begin to circulate within the county—typically from late fall to early spring—the department publishes a Putnam Flu Map online. Numbers for both Flu A and B

2016-2017 Putnam County Laboratory Confirmed Influenza Cases



cases, as well as unspecified types, are tracked along with case locations depicted on the map. Additionally, for “Weekly Influenza Surveillance Reports” published by the New York State Department of Health from October through May visit: www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/surveillance

To find the Putnam Flu Maps visit:
www.putnamcountyny.com/health/for-health-care-providers

Intervening with Youth Substance Abuse

Rates of excessive alcohol use and binge drinking continue to be higher in Putnam County than in New York State, not just among adults but with adolescents as well.

For physicians and other health care providers seeing adolescent patients, the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) offers free online continuing medical education (CME) training on research-based clinical strategies to prevent and address this growing problem.

After completing the two-module activity (for 1.0 credit total) participants should be better able to explain why this age category is at high risk for developing a substance abuse disorder and how they can help prevent it. In part one, providers enhance their repertoire for building trust with adolescents while ensuring confidentiality and determining the risk level of their young patients. Strategies tailored to level of use and follow-up techniques are covered in part two of the CME training.

For more information or to access this or other trainings, visit: www.elearning.asam.org and search “adolescent.”