



# Department of Health

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **PUTNAM COUNTY RANKS AMONG TOP FIVE COUNTIES IN NYS, FOR EIGHTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR**

Brewster, NY—The eighth annual *County Health Rankings* have been released by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. For the eighth consecutive year, Putnam County ranks among the top five counties in New York State. Putnam is fifth in health outcomes based on length and quality of life, and fourth in health factors, the influencers of health. Last year Putnam was also fifth in health outcomes, and second in health factors, from among the 62 counties in the state.

“Putnam County is a great place to live and work. We are fortunate to have a safe, clean environment and this allows us to enjoy a healthy lifestyle and a pattern of good health,” said County Executive MaryEllen Odell. “Our nationally accredited health department partners with other county agencies and community organizations. Together they work diligently to ensure our residents’ health.”

“These rankings are great news,” said Michael Nesheiwat M.D., Interim Commissioner of Health. “For the eighth consecutive year we are demonstrating a higher level of wellbeing by being among the healthiest in the state. The numbers shift from year to year of course, based not just on our own statistics, but as a result of numbers from other New York State health departments. Overall, there are no big surprises. This data reconfirms the health concerns currently on our radar, ones we are targeting for improvement.”

Similar to previous years, one of the identified challenges in the county is a higher rate for excessive alcohol use in Putnam compared to the rest of New York State. The good news is that the rate of alcohol-impaired driving deaths has decreased from 27%, reported last year, to 22% this year. The health

department continues to work closely with The Prevention Council of Putnam (formerly the Putnam chapter of the National Council on Alcoholism and other Drug Dependencies) and the Communities That Care (CTC) coalition on this pressing issue.

The second noteworthy health concern, again similar to last year, relates to the continuing rise of sexually transmitted diseases, including the three major ones: gonorrhea, syphilis and chlamydia. This problem is not limited to Putnam or even New York State, but is a concerning nationwide trend. From 2016 to 2017, cases of gonorrhea in Putnam rose 59 percent, from 17 cases to 27. This jump comes on the heels of previous dramatic increases in Putnam of syphilis and chlamydia. Syphilis went from 8 to 18 cases, a dramatic rise of 125 percent from 2015 to 2016; chlamydia numbers have more than quadrupled in the last decade. Left undiagnosed and untreated, these diseases can have serious health consequences including infertility and in rare cases, even death. The PCDOH continues to spearhead prevention and surveillance efforts, including working closely with county physicians to increase routine testing.

For more information on the 2018 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, visit

<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org>

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](http://www.putnamcountyny.com) ; or visit our social media sites on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/putnamhealth](http://www.facebook.com/putnamhealth) and Twitter @PutnamHealthNY.

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