



PUTNAM COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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www.putnamcountyny.gov/health

A PHAB-ACCREDITED HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PCDOH Offers Free HIV Testing on June 27;

1 in 5 new cases are among youth and young adults

BREWSTER, NY— About 1.1 million people in the U.S. are living with HIV, and one in seven of them don't know that they are infected. These statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta are the reason for having National HIV Testing Day each year on June 27— to encourage people of all ages to get tested. This year the Putnam County Department of Health will again be offering free HIV testing on Wednesday, June 27, at the main health department office at 1 Geneva Road in Brewster from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

“We have come a long way in improving the treatment for HIV since the disease was first seen in the U.S. decades ago,” says County Executive MaryEllen Odell. “That’s why it is important to get tested and start treatment early.”

“Undetected and untreated, the human immunodeficiency virus, HIV, usually causes AIDS, which is often a fatal disease,” said Michael Nesheiwat, MD, Putnam County’s Interim Commissioner of Health. “However today numerous medications exist to treat the virus. Early diagnosis and treatment has transformed patient outcomes and they can live long and productive lives. Even one death from AIDS today is too many. Early detection and treatment is also key to limiting spread of the virus. Everyone should be tested for HIV testing at least once, if not on a routine basis.”

In the early stages of HIV infection a person may feel fine. The only way to know for certain if a person is infected is to get tested. Free HIV testing and counseling will be offered by the Putnam County Department of Health on June 27 with results ready in just 20 minutes. No appointments are necessary, and privacy and confidentiality are ensured. Free condoms, giveaways and educational information will be available.

This year the official CDC theme for the day is “Doing It My Way, Testing for HIV,” which highlights the importance of HIV testing and that individuals can choose HIV testing on their own terms. For those who are busy on June 27, or wish to be tested at a different time, the health department offers free testing throughout the year as well. The walk-in clinic hours are on Tuesdays from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. and on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Other options include getting tested by a personal health care provider or at the federally qualified health center Open Door Brewster. When and where to get tested is a person’s own choice. The important thing is to get tested. For questions or concerns about scheduling a test, or for more information about HIV testing or HIV/AIDS education and prevention, contact the health department at (845) 808-1390.

HIV can affect anyone regardless of age, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity or gender. Among new HIV diagnoses in 2016 in the U.S., 21 percent were among youth and young adults, 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 2015, people aged 50 and older accounted for 17 percent of those living with HIV infection.

Today people with HIV and AIDS do live longer, healthier lives, and new research is promising, but there is still no vaccine or cure for HIV. Safe sex is still the best “primary prevention.” Older Americans are more likely than youth to be tested later in the course of their disease. This means delayed treatment, and as a result, more health problems. Despite medical advances, HIV/AIDS is still a significant cause of death for some age groups. It was the 8th leading cause of death for those 25 to 34 years of age in 2014 in the U.S.

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.

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