



PUTNAM COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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A PHAB-ACCREDITED HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Public Health Efforts Continue as Putnam County Comes Back to Life

BREWSTER, NY—A deliberate, phased-in approach to reopening began in other parts of the state. Now its Putnam and the Mid-Hudson region's turn. Deaths from COVID-19 have continued to decline and contact tracer training is underway, so phase one has begun.

“We have been watching carefully around the State and we know what a safe re-opening looks like,” County Executive MaryEllen Odell said. “It is a delicate process. Getting the economy moving again is crucial, which is why Putnam County formed the ‘Reopen Putnam Safely Task Force.’ We must all do our part and not become complacent.

Following the guidance will ensure the virus continues to decline. Large gatherings and crowds still need to be avoided, as we continue to practice social and physical distancing. The good news is that over the Memorial Day weekend, we saw residents at Putnam beaches showing restraint and being responsible.”

The key is to remain diligent in practicing the tried-and-true public health practices of good hygiene, social distancing and now keeping gatherings to groups of less than ten people. By keeping groups small, contact tracing can be managed. According to the NYS reopening benchmarks, thirty contact tracers are needed per 100,000 residents.

However, NYS reopening requirements for Putnam stipulated that the county identify 84 contact tracers in order to track and identify people who may become sick and advise them on how to avoid spreading the virus further.

Putnam County's Health Commissioner Michael J. Nesheiwat, MD, also emphasized the importance of continuing public health efforts, saying, “Everyone must remain strong and continue to practice social distancing, hand washing and wearing face coverings. With these practices we have flattened the curve. With these practices we can keep it flattened. Then we can continue to reopen and get everyone back to work. The key words are caution, patience and perseverance.”

In Putnam, as around the state, Phase One begins with the reopening of businesses where physical distancing can be most easily preserved. Construction, farms and landscaping businesses, manufacturing, and wholesale trade are some of the businesses that are getting the green light first. Retail establishments as well can open, limited to curbside or in-store pickup or drop off. If all proceeds with reason and restraint and hot spots are quickly identified through contact tracing and testing, progress will continue. If lapses occur, it will take some time for that to be reflected in the numbers of positive cases and hospitalizations.

Anonymous cellphone data shows that people across the country initially took very seriously the government's advice to stay at home. Now with the warmer weather, the easing of restrictions in some areas, and nearly everyone tired of staying home, more people are venturing out more. This is all good for the economy. If public health practices can remain in place, then resurges can be contained, the economy will continue to revive itself. Putnam residents can continue to do their part, both for the health of the community and to support local businesses.

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, provided directly and through collaboration, 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/coronavirus; or visit our social media sites @PutnamHealthNY on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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