



PUTNAM COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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A PHAB-ACCREDITED HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: June 8, 2020

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**Outdoor Dining and In-store Retail Shopping Returns;
*County Agencies Reopen June 8***

BREWSTER, NY— Phase II reopening begins in Putnam and the Mid-Hudson region, and outside dining will soon be back. Barbershop trims and “Cuts and Colors,” office-based work including Putnam County agencies, and in-store retail shopping are also some of the familiar activities that will resume at this stage. Putnam County offices will reopen June 8, with Phase II anticipated to start officially the following day. Modified schedules and services may be in place, and appointments may be necessary. Calling ahead is advised.

“The good news is that we have local businesses that are committed to the well-being of our community,” says County Executive MaryEllen Odell. “We have counted on them in the past to sponsor our little leagues and support causes we care about. Now they have stepped up to do everything from donating meals to front line workers to implementing innovative safety protocols. Towns and municipalities are working to streamline the permit process to allow more local restaurants to begin to offer outdoor dining. The private/government partnerships are working together both for the health of our community and to support our local businesses.”

For outdoor dining, restaurants will incorporate the “new normal” safety measures such as tables spaced six feet apart. All staff will be required to wear face coverings at all times, and customers must do the same when not seated. Restaurants with outside dining areas will be required to follow 13-pages of guidelines issued by New York State Department of Health, issued on June 3. It covers everything from mandatory daily health screenings of restaurant staff to instituting 6-foot spacing in table arrangement, as well as lines for payment areas, restrooms, and food pick-up areas. Restaurants seeking to open new outdoor seating spaces such as on sidewalks, grass lawns or parking lots, are partnering with local town and village building departments. These municipalities are working to expedite permits to accommodate the restaurants and their customers. Restaurants may be allowed to expand outdoors with PCDOH and local Code Enforcement approval.

Retail shopping, barbershops and hair salons, and County agencies are also reopening, all with strict New York State and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) requirements for face coverings and distancing. Some apprehension is normal and ultimately wise, but significant progress has been made to lower the infection rate and this is good news for residents, businesses and organizations alike.

Putnam County's Health Commissioner Michael J. Nesheiwat, MD, urged all employees, whether they work for small businesses, not-for-profit organizations, or the County, to remember that "If you are not feeling well or you are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, you should remain home. We have done a great job of 'flattening the curve.' It is important not to lose sight of this and to continue to pay attention and monitor our health."

COVID-19 symptoms, which can be mild or severe, include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. These are the current symptoms presented on the CDC website at [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) and may be updated as new symptoms are identifying with this novel illness. Additionally, some people have been found to spread the disease "silently," meaning they are asymptomatic and have no symptoms or their symptoms are so mild they don't know they are sick. People should err on the side of caution and if not feeling completely well, to stay or work from home whenever possible. This is also the reason for the mandatory use of face coverings in public spaces, where distancing is not always possible. Examples of these types of situations are in hallways, elevators and small reception or waiting areas.

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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