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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**PARENTAL CONSENT NOW REQUIRED FOR BODY PIERCING OF MINORS**

**Public Health Law Amended to Account for Risks**

Brewster, NY- The potential risks linked to body piercing have prompted New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) officials to change public health law. Governor Andrew Cuomo signed an amendment to Public Health Law Article 4-A, which now prohibits owners, operators and employees of body piercing studios from piercing a person under 18 years of age, without written consent of a parent or legal guardian. The new law, under which ear piercing is exempt, went into effect on October 28 throughout New York State.

“The health risks associated with body piercings can be serious,” said Allen Beals, MD, Putnam County’s Commissioner of Health. “Hepatitis, skin infections, allergic reactions and prolonged bleeding are just some of the serious consequences that can result.” Dr. Beals went on to explain that if an individual has an existing or underlying medical condition such as diabetes, heart disease, allergies, skin disorders or conditions that affect the immune system, the risk of possible complications increases. “We do not have a large number of body piercing establishments in Putnam County, but parents still need to be fully informed of the potential problems and make the best decision based on complete information,” he continued.

Written consent requires parents to complete an official form (NYSDOH Form 5072) in

the presence of the body piercing studio owner or body piercing specialist. This form, entitled “Parent or Legal Guardian Consent for Body Piercing of a Person Under 18 Years of Age,” is available online at <http://www.health.ny.gov/forms/doh-5072> or accessible through the Putnam County website. The original must be retained by the studio for 12 months.

Body piercing is a form of body art which also includes tattooing. Tattooing of minors under 18 is prohibited by NYS Penal Law—even with parental or guardian consent. Comprehensive statewide health regulations for both piercing and tattooing are currently being developed by the NYS Department of Health. Public health law gives the State Health Commissioner the authority to develop regulations that establish operating standards, fees, fines and penalties for failure to abide by the regulations. The current law requires tattoo and body piercing operators to obtain a permit to operate a studio and for individual tattoo and piercing artists to obtain individual permits.

The Health Department’s mission is to improve and protect the health of the county’s nearly 100,000 residents through prevention of illness and injury. Core services include community health assessment, disease surveillance and control, environmental health protection, family health promotion and health education. For more information, please visit our 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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