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## COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

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### ***Be smart—and Proactive—about Radon***

Radon causes over 21,000 lung cancer deaths a year in the U.S. and contributes to the high lung cancer death rate in Putnam County. Rates are higher in Putnam when compared to both the Hudson Valley region and New York State overall. Putnam, in fact, is one of the counties in New York State considered a “high-risk radon zone” by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Testing your home is the only way to know if you and your family are at risk.

You can't see or smell it, but it still may cause a health hazard in your home. Radon gas occurs naturally from the normal, radioactive breakdown of uranium in soil, rock and water. It can seep into buildings through floor and wall cracks, construction joints and gaps, and through the water supply. Breathing air with radon puts you at risk because radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer, after smoking. Exposure to both radon and cigarette smoke, poses an even greater health risk. When combined, a truly toxic cocktail is formed, synergistically increasing an individual's risk for lung cancer.

Testing for radon is easy, affordable and requires little time. Now, with the launch of the Putnam County Department of Health's new radon testing campaign, it is even simpler. Test kits will be available soon for \$10, including the lab fee. These short-term test devices remain in your home for a few days checking the air, then are sealed and sent for analysis. Results are usually received within a few weeks. If elevated levels are found, the problem can be fixed. Costs vary; inexpensive solutions can remedy some situations.

Watch for the upcoming launch of the Health Department's Radon Testing Campaign, or call the Health Department for further information at 845-808-1390.

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