



PUTNAM COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

1 Geneva Road, Brewster, NY 10509 ■ 845-808-1390

www.putnamcountyny.gov/health

A PHAB-ACCREDITED HEALTH DEPARTMENT

MaryEllen Odell
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Michael J. Nesheiwat, MD
COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: May 9, 2019

Contact: Susan Hoffner, Public Information Officer, (845) 808-1390

Free Hepatitis C Testing at PCDOH on May 20; *CDC Recommends One-time Testing for All Baby Boomers*

BREWSTER, NY—The Putnam County Department of Health (PCDOH) is offering free hepatitis C testing in recognition of National Hepatitis C Testing Day. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, hepatitis C causes more deaths among Americans than any other infectious disease. Free testing, especially targeted to New York State baby boomers, will take place on Monday, May 20. Anyone can get “Hep C,” but those born from 1945 through 1965 are five times more likely to be infected with the virus. Testing starts at 10 a.m. and runs until 4 p.m. at the main health department office at 1 Geneva Road in Brewster. No appointment is necessary and results are ready in 20 minutes.

“You can have Hep C infection without knowing it, says County Executive MaryEllen Odell. “And this free test can be the first step to getting lifesaving care and treatment.”

“Hep C can live in your body for decades without producing any symptoms and the longer someone lives with the untreated infection, the more likely they are to develop life-threatening liver disease,” says Health Commissioner, Michael J. Nesheiwat, M.D. “Seventy-five percent of people with Hepatitis C were born from 1945 to 1965. This is why U.S. health officials have come together to recommend a one-time test for all baby boomers, regardless of risk factors.”

Hepatitis C is primarily spread through contact with infected blood. Baby boomers may have gotten infected from contaminated blood and blood products before routine screening

started in 1992. Others may have become infected from injecting drugs, even if they did it only once in the past. Many baby boomers don't know how or when they were infected.

There are 2.4 million Americans living with hepatitis C and most people don't have symptoms until the later stages of the infection. When left untreated, Hepatitis C can cause liver failure, cirrhosis and cancer. There is no vaccine to prevent Hepatitis C. Getting tested is the best way to know if an infection exists and then treatment can be started as soon as possible. For many, treatment can cure Hepatitis C.

Residents who are unable to make the Free Testing Day on May 20, can call the health department at 845-808-1390 for information about other free testing opportunities.

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.

###