

Putnam County Department of Health

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I. Description of Department

The Putnam County Department of Health (PCDOH) is divided into five divisions: Early Intervention; Fiscal and Administration; Health Education (includes Epidemiology and Public Health Emergency Preparedness); Nursing and Clinical Services; and Environmental Health Services. While each area operates with distinct staff members, they collaborate to provide Putnam County residents with the highest quality programs and services.

The Board of Health serves the PCDOH by advising on public health policy. Division managers provide regular reports to the Board and attend meetings at the request of the health commissioner to present and discuss relevant health issues.

II. Services Provided (Divisions and Programs)

Early Intervention and Preschool Programs

The Early Intervention (EI) program evaluates infants and toddlers from birth through two years of age for developmental delays (physical, cognitive, communication, social-emotional, and adaptive). If eligible for services, the EI program provides special instruction, speech, occupational, and physical therapy, and other services as appropriate. The Preschool Special Education program provides similar services for eligible children three to five years of age diagnosed with a disability that affects their ability to learn.

Environmental Health Services

The Division of Environmental Health Services (EHS) implements specific strategies and ensures environmental quality in Putnam County. Enforcement of the New York State and Putnam County Sanitary Code and applicable laws, administrative rules, and regulations guides all programmatic activities. Public Health 12 Protection (PHP) strategies include monitoring and regulating service establishments and other public facilities. Regulations are also enforced to ensure rabies control, lead poisoning prevention, and clean indoor air. In addition, environmental quality is ensured by monitoring water quality and regulating public water systems, treatment plants, sewage disposal systems, and solid waste facilities; approving realty subdivision plans and construction; providing environmental risk assessment; and responding to environmental emergencies.

Fiscal/Administrative

The Fiscal/Administrative Division is responsible for the financial oversight at the PCDOH. Preparation of all financial reports, including State Aid reimbursement, grant

and fiscal monitoring, purchase orders, and accounts receivable, are performed by fiscal office staff. Department-wide policies and procedures dealing with time accruals, call-in, travel requests, and reimbursement are also handled by this division as well as all personnel related needs.

Health Education

The core functions of the Health Education Division include: assessing and monitoring population health; communicating effectively on health, health factors, and health improvement; and strengthening, supporting and mobilizing communities and partnerships. The Health Education division coordinates and promotes countless disease-specific prevention campaigns and programs throughout the year to the residents of Putnam County. Public information is made available in English and Spanish through social media, media releases, alerts and advisories. Education and health promotion for residents is also achieved through engagement and outreach activities, cross-sector coalitions, and community presentations. Epidemiologic support is provided within the department and with partner agencies through ongoing surveillance, data analysis, assessment, and evaluation activities and surveys. The division is primarily responsible for producing the Putnam County Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHA/CHIP), both required by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH). Together, these efforts support departmental and countywide initiatives and planning. Additionally, Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) staff work within the health education division and oversee the planning, implementation, and evaluation of PHEP, Cities Readiness Initiatives (CRI), Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and related activities. Health Education is also responsible for the management of the Putnam County Employee Wellness program, supporting health improvement for all county employees.

Nursing and Clinical Services

The Nursing Division utilizes a variety of strategies to improve and monitor the health status of Putnam County residents. These include outreach to populations at risk for specific health problems; increasing access to services, either by direct provision of care or by partnering; maternal child health (MCH) consults; screening and surveillance for the early detection of disease; health education and promotion activities to improve prevention; and coalition development within the community to address service gaps. Nursing case management is provided through the lead poisoning prevention, tuberculosis control, and rabies prevention and control programs. Clinical services are provided in the areas of immunization, HIV and hepatitis C testing and counseling, and tuberculosis testing, diagnosis, and treatment. The PCDOH maintains a license for a Licensed Home Care Services Agency (LHCSA) which ensures the ability of the department to continue conducting home visits for the mandated public health programs such as MCH, lead poisoning prevention, communicable disease, and immunization. Approval for this program was obtained through the NYSDOH, which also conducts periodic surveys to assess for regulatory compliance. The PCDOH LHCSA is not a full-service agency as personal care and home health services are not provided.

Divisions and Programs

Environmental Health

- Enforcement of Regulations
- Complaint/ Request for Service Program
- Putnam County Sanitary Code

Facility Inspections

- Children's Camps
- Food Service Establishments
- Mobile Home Parks
- Migrant Farmworker Housing Program
- Tanning Facilities
- Temporary Residences & Campgrounds
- Tobacco Control Program
- Public Swimming Pools
- Public Bathing Beaches
- Daycare Centers
- Public Water Supply Sanitary Surveys

Food Safety

- Food-Borne Illness & Complaint Investigation
- Permanent and Temporary Food Service

Injury Prevention

- Lead Poisoning Prevention*

Other Environmental Health Programs

- FOIL requests
- Food Operators Seminars
- Camp Operators Seminars
- Feral Cat Program
- Rabies*
- Mosquito & Stagnant Water Complaints
- Tick Identification
- Tobacco Control (ATUPA)
- Indoor Air Quality (CIAA)

Land Development

- Commercial Development (New Construction)
- Major Projects
- Home Additions
- Realty Subdivision
- PFAS Removal
- Septic Repair Program
- Septic System Replacement Program for Lake Oscawana, Palmer Lake, and the East Branch Croton Middle Tributaries
- New York City Watershed Rules and Regulations
- Septic System Contractor Licensing Program

Solid Waste and Recycling

- Solid Waste Management Planning
- Household Hazardous Waste Events
- Waste Hauler Permitting
- Pharmaceutical Disposal (Medication Take Back)
- Compost Bins
- Recycling Promotion

Public Water Supply and Services

- Water Quality Improvement Initiative
- Drinking Water Enhancement Grant
- Emerging Contaminants
- Water Operator Certifications

Individual Water Supply and Services

- Well Permit Program

Fiscal/Administration

- Budget
- Grant Management
- State Aid
- Time Bank/Overtime/Temp payroll
- Personnel Management

*Cross-divisional program



Putnam County Department of Health

A PHAB-ACCREDITED HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Divisions and Programs

Early Intervention and Preschool Programs

- Early Intervention Program
- Preschool Special Education Program
- Child Find Program*

Health Education

Community Health Education

- Educational presentations, workshops, tabling
- Health Promotion, Community Outreach, and Engagement
- Training Coordination
- Employee Wellness
- Undergraduate and Graduate School Experiences

Epidemiology

- Community Health Assessment
- Community Health Improvement Planning and Implementation
- Program Evaluation
- Disease Surveillance*
- Community Surveys

Media and Community Relations

- Public Information Communications
- Social Media Engagement
- Health Promotion and Education Campaigns
- Coalition and Task Force representation, and Community Partner Support

Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP)

- Cities Readiness Initiative
- Plan and Program Development
- Workshops, Tabletops, Functional and Full-scale exercises
- Medical Reserve Corps

Nursing and Clinical Programs

Communicable Disease Control and Surveillance

- 80 reportable communicable diseases, 34 “red phone” 24-hour response diseases
- Arthropod
- Hepatitis A, B, C
- Perinatal Hepatitis B + C
- HIV/AIDS
- HIV/Hepatitis C Clinics
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Tuberculosis Control
- Rabies*
- Enteric Disease Investigation
- COVID-19

Immunizations

- Child and Adult Vaccine Clinics
- Travel Vaccine Clinics
- Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Program
- School-Based Flu Clinics
- Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Clinics
- Influenza Mapping
- Overnight Camp Infirmity Inspections

Licensed Home Care Services Agency (LHCSA)

- Maternal and Child Health Program
- Newborn Screening Program
- Prenatal/Postpartum Newborn Visiting Program
- Parent Support Groups
- Child Find Program*

Other

- Educational presentations and outreach*
- Opioid Overdose Prevention Program*
- Death Certificate Review
- Chronic Disease Prevention

*Cross-divisional program



Putnam County Department of Health
A PHAB-ACCREDITED HEALTH DEPARTMENT

III. Mission Statement

The mission of the Putnam County Department of Health is to improve and protect the health of our community.

IV. Population Served

Putnam County Department of Health services are made available to all residents. Early Intervention, Preschool, and Child Find serve children birth to five years of age, and their families.

V. Significant Events and Accomplishments in 2024 (by division and committee)

Early Intervention and Preschool Programs

- The New York State Early Intervention Program new data and information management system has faced implementation challenges that have impacted work efficiency, data and billing and claims challenges. Providers including the County for Service coordination cannot bill and the claims that work are being lost or denied. The County as well as contracted providers are being impacted, with some providers leaving the program. Already long waitlists for services will start to get even longer.
- Changes from the New York State Education Department has resulted in an increased expenses incurred by the County for special instructors, center-based services, evaluations, and the price per CPSE student to receive services. This results in a roughly estimated budget, and many subsequent budgetary transfers.
- Putnam County Early Intervention and Preschool has initiated an innovative, solutions-focused adaptation to the current service delivery model for preschool programs. This model would keep more students within Putnam County for high-quality preschool, ensure shorter bus rides for many students, and ease the financial burden of the County. The County is currently in the planning phase with school districts to begin making the locally-based program a reality in 2025-2026.

Environmental Health Services

Adolescent Tobacco Use Prevention Act (ATUPA):

- Recent changes in law have made it illegal to sell flavored vapor products in New York State. Compliance inspections are performed annually and in 2024, there was a significant number of fines associated with vapor product sales in this program. Six (6) cases were concluded in 2024, and \$28,300 was collected in civil penalties for tobacco and vapor product enforcements.

Rabies:

- 434 potential rabies exposures were investigated, 34 treatments for potential rabies exposure, 66 samples tested for rabies, and four positive rabies result (bat, skunk, cat, raccoon).
- Three rabies clinics were held: March, July, and November. A total of 260 animals were vaccinated for rabies (162 dogs, 96 cats and 2 ferrets).

- The Feral Cat Task Force, a partner program with Putnam AdvoCats, processed 168 cats, 46 of those were fostered/adopted. All cats over four months old receive rabies vaccinations before they are released or adopted. The Towns of Patterson and Putnam Valley and the Putnam Humane Society provided additional funding to support the initiative.

Childrens Camps:

- 21 permits were issues,14 injuries investigated, 30 illnesses investigated, and 1 epinephrine administration reported.
- On May 9, 2024, the Putnam County Department of Health (PCDOH) camp program staff hosted its first virtual "Children's Camp Seminar" via Microsoft Teams. Nineteen out of the 21 camp operators attended the session. Presentation topics included assigned inspectors for the year and updates to code requirements. A highlight of the seminar was a guest appearance by the Director of Putnam County EMS, who discussed the new AED code requirement. The presentation slides and a recording of the meeting were shared with all camp operators and made available on the Putnam County Health Department's website.

Complaints/Requests for Services: Complaints may include issues at regulated facilities, septic system failures, lake and stream pollution, private and public water supplies, indoor air, hazardous waste investigations, and more.

- 220 complaints/requests for services were investigated.

Food Program

- Putnam County Department of Health staff worked with the Putnam County Youth Bureau, parents, and children to ensure safe food operation at the Youth Business Market at Tilly Foster Farm on June 9th, 2024. Youths prepared and sold lemonade, baked goods, and other food items.

Communicable Disease:

- In March and April 2024, the Putnam County Department of Health investigated illness outbreaks at an assisted living facility where some residents and staff suffered from diarrhea and/or vomiting. Laboratory testing supported the suspicion that norovirus was the agent responsible for the outbreaks.
- In December 2024, The Putnam County Department of Health investigated illness outbreaks at a golf course/caterer and school where residents and students suffered from diarrhea and/or vomiting.

Lead Poisoning Prevention Program:

- There were 7 (seven) new cases of children with elevated blood lead levels, which required environmental health to perform inspections to assess for lead hazards and provide guidance for the correction of any identified hazards

Beaches:

- During the summer of 2024, several public bathing beaches were impacted by environmental conditions that caused closures. Closures were due to the presence of bacteria, and blue-green algae blooms.

Solid Waste Management:

- Two Household Hazardous Waste Day events were held at Fahnestock State Park's Canopus Beach Parking Lot in Kent. A total of 641 residents attended and safely disposed of their household chemicals.

- During 2024, a new full time Solid Waste Manager position was added to the 2025 budget. This position will be responsible for the Local Solid Waste Management Plan and will work on waste reduction, recycling and composting projects in addition to other goals and objectives.

Engineering & Water:

Lead Service Line Inventory

- Community and Non-Transient Non-Community Water Supplies within Putnam County that were required by the USEPA to comply with Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR), submitted service line inventories by the October 16, 2024 deadline. Our department will continue to provide oversight for compliance with notification requirements of the LCRR.

Commercial Campus at Fields Corners (T)SE: The project consists of two large warehouse buildings that will be broken up into several different tenant spaces.

- The total square footage of both warehouses is 933,100 sq. ft.
- Proposed Building A employees: 375
- Proposed Building B employees: 665
- Building A Design Flow: 4500 gallons per day
- Building B Design Flow: 7980 gallons per day
- Each building has its own septic system and 100% expansion area.
- Non-Transient, Non-Community Public Water Supply System.
- Water System approved by NYSDOH on February 23, 2022.
- Septic System approved on April 13th, 2022.
- Construction commenced in Summer of 2022 and continued throughout 2023 and 2024.
- The septic systems for both buildings have been constructed and inspected by PCDOH.
- Buildings are still under construction but close to completion
- NYSDOH approved the completed works for the wells, treatment and storage section of the water system on November 7, 2024.
- NYSDOH still needs to approve the completed works for the water distribution system.
- PCDOH is still waiting for the completed works submission for the septic systems.

Brewster Yards: Located at Fields Corners Lane & Pugsley Rd (across the street from the Commercial Campus Project).

- Proposed commercial septic system and public water supply.
- Project consists of the following:
 - 4 Baseball Fields
 - 1 Showcase Field
 - 4 Little League Fields
 - 1 Multi-Sport Field
 - 3 Batting Cage Facilities
 - 3 Concession/Restroom Facilities
 - 2 Concession Facilities
 - 35,000 sq. ft. Indoor Facility
 - Parking Areas (449 Parking Spaces, 8 Bus Parking Spaces)
 - 1 Playground

- Application was received on January 3, 2023, and has been under review throughout the year.
- Since the project is commercial and is within the NYCDEP watershed, the septic application has been under joint review with the NYCDEP engineering division.
- Non-Transient, Non-Community Public Water Supply System (PWS)
- PWS has been under review with the PCDOH.
- Approved by PCDOH on February 8, 2024

EE Brewster: Located on Route 22 across from the Lakeview shopping center (formerly the Golf Dome)

- Application for two new wells.
- Proposed community public water supply and commercial septic system.
- Wells were approved for drilling and testing. Full application received March 10, 2023.
- Project consists of two 50-unit senior housing complexes and two large storage buildings (32,400 sq. ft.).
- Located at 1534 Route 22 (across the street from the Lakeview Shopping Center).
- NYSDOH approved the new community water system on December 6, 2024
- NYCDEP approved the septic system on November 20, 2024
- PCDOH is ready to approve the septic system pending submission of additional plans from the project engineer.

HHR Subdivision:

- HHR is a proposed 24 lot subdivision off of Route 9 south of the intersection of East Mountain Road South and Old Albany Post Rd.
- The septic will be a central system for all 24 lots. There will be no individual septic systems.
- Each lot will contain a 5-bedroom residence.
- Each lot will have an individual well.
- Application was submitted at the end of 2023. Currently under review.
- Estimate approval date in early 2025.

Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival (Phase 1):

- Formerly the Garrison Golf Club (2015 Route 9, Garrison, NY (T)Philipstown)
- The Banquet Hall, Inn, Restaurant, and Bar to remain in use.
- New Outdoor Theater (in use from early spring to late fall)
- The former golf course managers quarters to become office space and one apartment
- The existing septic system for the golf course to be used
- The existing water supplies for the banquet, inn, restaurant, and bar to remain in use
- Existing total design flow: 12,800 gallons per day
- Revised total design flow: 8,009 gallons per day
- Additional flow available: 4,791 gallons per day
- Proposed transient non community water system design for the new theater
- Application has been reviewed and received verbal approval on December 18, 2024. Formal approval will be granted for phase 1 in early 2025.

PFAS (Perfluoroalkyl AND Polyfluoroalkyl Substances):

- NYSDOH lowered the Maximum Contaminant Level from the EPA guideline of 70 ppt (parts per trillion) to 10 ppt effective August 26, 2020.

- Since that time, we have been receiving numerous applications for community and non-community, non-transient water systems to treat PFAS with Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) Filtering Units.
- In 2024, the PCDOH in conjunction with the NYSDOH Bureau of Water Supply continued on going review and approval of PFAS treatment systems.

Fiscal/Administration

- Fiscal staff implemented engaging trainings, called “Fiscal Fairs” for employees on all fiscal-related procedures. Topics were determined based on staff input and were designed to enhance compliance and efficiency.

Notable Savings Realized

- In 2024, the State reimbursed Putnam County Health Department an additional \$500,000 due to changes that were enacted in 2022, which added fringe benefits to the allowable expenses for reimbursement from the State at 36%. These additional revenues will continue year after year.

Health Education

Health Education Programming, Media, and Community Relations:

- Published 11 monthly employee spotlights, highlighting 13 employees and their work serving county residents.
- Social media engagement across three platforms increased 28% from 2023.
- Developed a tickborne disease webpage to provide comprehensive information to residents about tickborne disease prevention and treatment.
- Streamlined the website by working with Epidemiology and Informatics to create a Respiratory Virus Surveillance report to replace separate Influenza and COVID-19 reports.
- Increased accessibility on social media by implementing a Spanish translation procedure as well as increasing alternative text descriptions of images.
- Collaborated with the Department of Social Services, Mental Health, and the Youth Bureau to conduct Youth Mental Health First Aid training for two Putnam County School Districts.
- Co-facilitated a breakout session on Opioid Overdose Prevention at the Statewide Harm Reduction Symposium.
- Co-facilitated Trauma-Informed training for three agencies servicing Putnam residents.
- Established work groups for the BR;DGE Alliance, a cross-sector, multi-agency coalition addressing fatal and non-fatal overdoses in Putnam County (BR;DGE Alliance). Work groups meet to address three topics, prioritized by input from key stakeholders: Stigma, Hope for Recovery, and Youth-Focused.
- Developed youth vaping education and prevention traveling display to lend to local libraries, schools and community organizations.
- Expanded collaboration with Prevention Council of Putnam to expand capacity to deliver evidence-based vaping education sessions along with vaping and smoking cessation programs to Putnam County youth. Together, the agencies delivered 17 Neuroplasticity workshops and 14 “Escape the Vape” sessions in Putnam County schools.

- Identified, wrote, and published 59 news items on the PCDOH website under “News & Events,” including 20 media releases and alerts disseminated directly to the media, one of which was done in collaboration with the County Executive’s Office. These efforts produced 45,661 hits on the website, an increase of more than 25 percent over the previous year’s tally of 35,829.
- Front-page news coverage included stories on lead poisoning prevention, the Medical Reserve Corps’ 20th anniversary, vaccine requirements for school children, blue-green algae blooms, a rabies alert and measles control in Putnam. Major stories accompanied by three to six photos were published on the Putnam County Public Health Summit, Putnam’s Go Red Day for heart health, the Medical Reserve Corps Conference and septic repair along with countless other digital and print stories.
- Television placements were also achieved through health department relationships with media contacts. News12 Westchester covered Putnam County’s Go Red day with a thirty-second spot using a montage of 6 curated photos that the health department had posted online. <https://westchester.news12.com/putnam-county-observes-go-red-day-for-heart-health> Additionally, coverage occurred in summer as multiple blue-green algae blooms closed beaches in the Hudson Valley including Putnam beaches.
- Hundreds of print and digital placements including published calendar event listings, posters and flyers sent to dozens of outlets on all health department and health department-supported community events PCDOH events.
- In total, comprehensive program and service promotion continue to contribute to successful outcomes—ranging from reaching new audiences to accessing new resources and building partnerships.
- The Live Healthy Putnam coalition, a community-based organization facilitated by the health department, formalized the group’s efforts to recognize community involvement with the first presentation of a Community Health Improvement Award, honoring an individual who has demonstrated committed efforts to health improvement by addressing social determinants of health and collaborating with diverse stakeholders. The inaugural award went to Victoria Metz, a certified recover peer advocate at The Prevention Council of Putnam.
- A Putnam County Employee Wellness flyer containing the employee wellness goals and wellness offerings was created for the Personnel Department to be provided to all new hires.
- Hosted one successful blood drive in partnership with the New York Blood Center. According to NYBC, the drive resulted in 27 pints collected which translates into 81 lives saved.
- Re-establishment of the Putnam County Employee Wellness Committee was approved by the County Executive. The goal of the Wellness Committee is to bolster employee health and well-being through county-sponsored wellness programming. The Wellness committee will serve in an advisory capacity and help to assess and improve current programs, provide input on future wellness offerings, and expand employee engagement and participation.
- In honor of National Heart Month, the Employee Wellness program partnered with the Bureau of Emergency Services to present “CPR – Be Ready to Save a Life”. This

class was designed to provide the ability to recognize a cardiac emergency and teach life-saving skills until EMS arrives.

- Wellness emails continue to be sent to all county employees and volunteers to reinforce the importance of self-care tips through office stretches, meditation practices, healthy food choices, and other healthy habits to incorporate in the workday. The promotion of physical and mental wellness improves the lives and health of employees, supporting their well-being, lessening workplace stress, and increasing productivity.
- Collaborated with the Sheriff's Office, Prevention Council of Putnam, and Putnam Hospital at two Medication Take Back events to collect 492 pounds of old or expired medication and 492 pounds of used sharps.
- Hosted 3 health education interns in 2024.
- Maintained participation on numerous county-wide task forces and coalitions: Community Resource Group, Communities That Care Coalitions, Health Emergency Preparedness Coalition, Putnam County Co-Occurring System of Care Coalition, Live Healthy Putnam, Putnam Mental Health Network, Suicide Prevention Task Force, Reproductive Health Coalition, Disaster Preparedness Community Resilience Task Force, School Health and Safety Committees, Putnam Hospital Community Health Needs Committee, Putnam County Food Systems Coalition, and Putnam County BR;DGE Alliance.
- The New York State Public Health Corps Fellows in Putnam County provide valuable assistance to a wide range of initiatives and interventions undertaken by the Putnam County Department of Health. Their work includes collaborating with local community partners to develop and present programs and activities, such as the 'Escape-the-Vape' and 'Neuroplasticity' presentations, as well as a traveling vape display made available to the community.
- Fellows also contribute to social media efforts and participate in specific interventions, such as early childhood vaccination and support for the early intervention division. Moreover, they play an active role in outreach and increasing the department's visibility, attending various events with information and resources that the health department and local community organizations offer.
- Premiered the "Wheel of Public Health" PCDOH uses this wheel to have participants answer questions based on various health topics, and is modified based on audience and event. At school health fairs topics range from vaping and substance use to healthy relationships, sexual health, and disease prevention. At the Country Fest the wheel tested attendees knowledge on topics related to each health department program.
- Hosted the 2024 Putnam County Public Health Summit with the theme, "Making Connections." Over 100 attendees from over 30 organizations were present. Victoria Metz, Certified Recovery Peer Advocate with the Prevention Council of Putnam was the recipient of the first Community Health Improvement Award. The nomination and voting process for this award was conducted through the Live Healthy Putnam Coalition. Read more about Victoria here: <https://putnamcountyny.gov/phs>
- PCDOH, along with Putnam County Coroner's Office, and Putnam County Department of Mental Health and Social Services, as well as the Child Advocacy

Center are in the planning phase for initiation of an Overdose and Fatality and Suicide Fatality Review Team in Putnam.

- Through the ATUPA fines collected, PCDOH is sponsoring youth smoking and vaping cessation train the trainers for school districts and other community organizations. This will enable organizations, including schools, to offer evidence-based sessions for young people to help them quit smoking/vaping.
- Successfully completed NYSDOH Year 12 Performance Incentive. The State Commissioner of Health to establishes performance standards for delivery of core public health services and provides additional funding referred to as incentive awards to Local Health Departments that meet or exceed these standards. This year's incentive was geared toward addressing chronic disease and utilized the CDC's Active Communities Guide and Toolkit. An action plan was written in collaboration with Supervisor Cazzari's office, which reflects work currently under way in Mahopac as well as expanded goals related to enhancing pedestrian safety and access.

Epidemiology/Informatics:

Disease surveillance and response:

- Weekly publication of a consolidated [Respiratory Virus Activity Report](#) was initiated in early November. In past years PCDOH published separate weekly Flu and COVID reports. The new consolidated report is highly automated and includes data for all three reportable respiratory viruses: COVID, Flu, and RSV. Individual case investigations are not done for these high-volume respiratory diseases, but surveillance is conducted to monitor trends and transmission patterns. Published reports provide information to healthcare professionals to inform clinical decision making, and the public for personal risk assessment. The new format gives healthcare providers and the public the ability to compare transmission levels and trends in all viruses in one convenient location.
- A [physician advisory](#) was sent to County healthcare providers via the Integrated Health Alerting Network System (IHANS) to alert them to increasing incidence of flu in December. Prevention messaging was shared with the public on social media in concert with the advisory.
- In response to NYSDOH launching a new platform for the New York State Electronic Syndromic Surveillance System (ESSS), epi revised the PCDOH daily monitoring protocol and trained nursing staff on use of the new system. ESSS monitoring provides a means for early identification of unusual disease occurrences, and the new platform provides better visibility of regional emergency department syndromic trends. In 2024, ESSS was used to monitor for increased heat related illness during heat waves and respiratory illness during periods of poor air quality.

Outbreak Response:

- The Outbreak Team continued to build its investigative and response capabilities with the creation of a digital outbreak communication log, a standardized site visit investigation form, and template outbreak interview questionnaires. We implemented a tech solution that gives us the ability to rapidly modify and deploy outbreak questionnaire templates on a platform where data can be securely collected, stored, and analyzed. The Outbreak Response Process and Procedure was continuously updated to reflect modifications instituted by the team based on lessons learned during outbreak responses.

- The team participated in investigative and disease control activities related to two norovirus outbreaks at an assisted living facility, and one norovirus outbreak associated with a series of catered holiday luncheons. Final reports were submitted to CDC through NYSDOH, with findings including a total of 89 cases across all three outbreaks.

Community Health Assessment:

- Systematic monitoring of community health indicators in years where a full-scale Community Health Assessment is not completed is accomplished through annual review of the [County Health Roadmaps and Rankings](#) findings for Putnam County. Epi completed an [Executive Summary](#) which was presented to community partner organizations at the April Putnam Hospital Community Health Committee meeting and the [2024 Public Health Summit](#). While Putnam continued to be amongst the healthiest counties in New York State, identification of areas in need of improvement, such as adult smoking rates and access to grocery stores, are useful to inform prioritization of community resources.
- Mid-Hudson Region counties successfully advocated NYSDOH through NYSACHO for the LHD CHA/CHIP timeline to be realigned with that of the NYS Prevention Agenda. LHDs will now be required to complete a comprehensive CHA and CHIP every 6 years rather than every three years. The new timeline gives LHDs more time to engage the community in development and implementation of the CHIP.
- PCDOH entered a collaboration with Nuvance Health to develop, promote, and administer two surveys designed to collect information about health issues and factors that affect health in the community. One survey was completed by Putnam residents, and another was completed by staff of Community Based Organizations that serve Putnam residents. Data analysis is underway for both surveys, and the results will contribute to the Comprehensive Community Health Assessment (CHA) due to the NYSDOH at the end of 2025.

2022-2024 Community Health Improvement Plan Initiatives

- PCDOH continued to lead an evidence-based intervention designed to increase early childhood vaccination rates by working with County pediatric practices to improve data quality and utilization of reminder/recall functionality in the New York State Immunization System (NYSIIS). To date, there has been a 49% yield on vaccination appointments made per notifications sent as a part of the intervention and early childhood vaccination coverage rates at participating practices have increase by a range of 1%-27% from baseline. The methodology and results of the intervention were presented to the Putnam Hospital Community Health Committee in April, and at the [Northeast Epidemiology Conference](#) in November.
- Progress updates on all initiatives targeting the 10 Main Health Challenges identified in the [2022-2024 CHA/CHIP](#) are shared with the community in the [2022-2024 CHA/CHIP Addendums](#).
- Program Evaluation: Systematic department-wide tracking of process and outcome metrics for population health initiatives was instituted at the start of 2024. This centralized metrics repository provides for internal awareness of initiatives, continuous evaluation of programs, and increased efficiency of information gathering for reports required to County government, PHAB, and NYSDOH.

Information Systems:

- Developed a new Community Partners Communications Directory by consolidating multiple outlook distribution lists into a single SharePoint database. The new directory provides PCDOH with a centralized location to maintain partner contact information with the ability to easily access and identify partners by organization name and/or sector.
- Upgraded the Department Events Calendar to allow for comprehensive tracking of event-related information and management of event requests and staff assignments.

Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP), Cities Readiness Initiative (CRI), Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

- PHEP Coordinator and Supervising Public Health Educator led PCDOH supervisors and managers through an Integrated Preparedness Plan Workshop to discuss current and future threats, hazards, and risks, within the scope of the entire preparedness cycle.
- Updated the PCDOH Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan to ensure alignment with national public health preparedness capabilities including medical material management and community preparedness.
- Participated in the annual MRC Technical Assistance Assessment program review with Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response staff, to discuss volunteer program data, activities and goals.
- Wrote an MRC Volunteer Management Plan which was submitted to the NYSDOH.
- Organized and conducted the 2024 Putnam County Medical Reserve Corps Conference where subject matter experts presented information on lessons learned on the I-84 Farmingdale bus crash, measles update, preparedness ambassador training and NYSDOH volunteer program updates.
- The PHEP/MRC Coordinator represented the PCDOH at the annual, national MRC Conference in Chicago, Ill.
- Oversaw production and content of a bi-monthly newsletter sent to MRC volunteers listing trainings, highlighting volunteers and included newsworthy topics on local, regional or national MRC issues.
- Collaborated with PCDOH staff, county and external agencies to promote MRC volunteer engagement.
- On-boarded and orientated a part-time MRC Assistant.
- A Proclamation recognizing the 20-year anniversary of the Putnam County MRC was presented to PCDOH staff and volunteers by the Legislature in September.
- Presented an overview of MRC to the Putnam County Board of Health in December.
- Coordinated MRC activation and participation in 2024 PCDOH influenza clinics, where volunteers contributed 209 hours for an economic value of \$8,996.

Nursing and Clinical Services

Communicable Disease Prevention and Control:

The Communicable Disease (CD) Prevention and Control program goal is to prevent, mitigate, and control the spread of disease in Putnam County. To accomplish these goals and to meet the mandates of New York State Public Health Law, the communicable disease nurses working with the Epidemiologist:

- Utilize an array of passive and active disease surveillance tools.
- Investigate cases of communicable diseases in our county.
- Respond to disease outbreaks in Putnam County.
- Provide disease education (disease information, prevention and control measures) both formally and informally to health professionals and to the community-at-large.

The New York State Sanitary Code mandates reporting of 77 different communicable diseases to local health departments. This includes two new diseases made reportable in 2024, varicella and RSV. Excluding COVID-19, influenza, and Lyme disease which are not investigated on an individual case basis, in the first 11 months of 2024, the communicable disease prevention and control program:

- Received and reviewed 10,397 lab reports of reportable communicable diseases.
- Based on assessment of these lab reports, staff conducted 5254 unique investigations of suspected cases of reportable communicable diseases.
- Based on the findings of investigations, staff created 448 confirmed or probable cases of reportable communicable disease and initiated disease control measures as appropriate to the nature of the disease.

Notable in 2024:

- New York City and New York State implemented changes in how hepatitis and syphilis lab were reported, initiating the reporting of negative labs for both of those diseases to local health departments. The reason is to more accurately identify acute/new cases based on historical knowledge of negative labs. This has resulted in a greater than 4-fold increase in lab reports requiring review by the communicable disease prevention and control program.
- Enteric disease reports and cases increased as compared to 2023 with a combined total of 237 lab reports received (13% increase), and 121 cases created (22% increase) for 11 different diseases.

2024 Outbreaks and Notable Investigations:

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an [outbreak](#) is the occurrence of more cases of a disease than would normally be expected in a specific place or group of people over a given period of time.

GI illness:

An Adult Care Facility in Putnam County experienced outbreaks of GI illness in March and again in April of 2024.

- The March outbreak consisted of a total of 15 probable and one confirmed case of Norovirus. Seven cases were in staff and nine were in residents.
- The April outbreak consisted of a total of 53 probable and two confirmed cases of norovirus. Twenty of the 55 cases were in staff and 35 were in facility residents.

PCDOH Outbreak Team response to these outbreaks included site visits, collection and submission of specimens for testing, patient interviews, data analysis provision of infection control guidance, and review of facility GI illness plans.

- In December of 2024 the PCDOH Outbreak Team responded to reports of illness associated with a series of catered holiday luncheons. Case finding activities resulted in the detection of 17 probable and one confirmed case of norovirus. Public Health

Sanitarians provided guidance to the luncheon venue to ensure there would be no further environmental exposures.

Pertussis:

- 19 cases of Pertussis were investigated, mostly in school age children. No links between cases were identified. NYS in general also reported higher than normal Pertussis cases.

Vaccine Disease Prevention Program

The Immunization Program is one of the major Putnam County Department of Health efforts in preventative care. Access to care is one of the 10 Essential Public Health Services and serves to expand health equity in Putnam County.

- Newborn Packets – in collaboration with the Lead Program new parents receive three postcards from PCDOH Immunization and Lead Programs;
 - All Putnam County parents of newborns receive a postcard with PCDOH information directing to “Parents of Newborn” informational page.
 - Birthday postcards are sent to remind parents to have children tested for lead at age 1 & 2 and to be up to date on immunizations.
 - 2355 postcards were mailed out in 2024.
- Travel Clinic – Although demand for travel vaccines has increased, PCDOH has placed the travel clinic on hiatus for 2025 due to lack of nursing staff.
 - 106 people received a total of 159 vaccines in 2024.
- Vaccine for Adults Program (MSFW/VFA):
 - Held monthly, except for August and November
 - 93 people received 172 vaccines in 2024.
 - Two VFA flu clinics annually in October and November
 - 88 flu vaccines administered
- School Based Flu Clinics
 - Fall of 2024 was the 15th year of this preventative program. Clinics are held in Putnam County’s 6 school districts.
 - 1249 flu vaccines administered
- 2024 Seasonal Flu Clinics
 - 2 drive-thru clinics
 - 129 vaccines administered
 - 1 in Garrison Fire Department
 - 55 vaccines administered
 - 1 employee drive thru is also held at PCDOH.
 - 169 vaccines administered
 - 4 Office of Senior Resources (OSR) senior centers.
 - 107 vaccines administered

PCDOH held a worksite wellness flu clinic on a fee for service basis at Unilock with 18 flu vaccines given.

Other Disease Control Services

Tuberculosis:

The goal of the TB program is the elimination of tuberculosis. The TB program contracts with The Federally Qualified Health Center to provide free services for Putnam County residents with TB disease and TB infection including testing, evaluation, and treatment. TB data is gathered and submitted to NYSDOH. In 2024 the TB program provided case management to;

- Tuberculosis Disease (Active TB)-5 cases required the following:
 - Coordination with NYSDOH TB control and Wadsworth laboratory for TB specimens and case management.
 - Coordination with local hospitals (Putnam, Danbury, WMC) for safe discharge planning.
 - Supervision of Directly observed therapy (DOT) of 124 in person home visits and 150 telehealth were completed.
- Tuberculosis infection (Latent TB infection)-5 cases initiated voluntary prophylactic treatment.
 - 3 patients completed treatment.
 - 4 office visits and 19 in person home visits were completed.
- PPD (TB skin screening tests)-31 tests were completed to employees and the public.
- Continued to work with the Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), Open Door Brewster, to improve process for referrals, and coordinating care for all TB patients per contract with clinic.
 - 17 total referrals received from or made to Open Door Brewster in 2024.
- New Contract finalized with Westchester County Dept of Labs and Research for testing of TB sputum specimens.
 - 3 TB sputum specimens sent out for testing.

HIV/AIDS:

Free HIV counseling and testing clinics are offered on an appointment and/or walk in basis. Putnam County DOH provides HIV testing and linkage to treatment. An added focus that is in line with the NYSDOH AIDS Institute's mission is to educate those we test and the community regarding pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) and U=U.

- 5 HIV screenings were completed at PCDOH
- Additional HIV screening tests were completed at Brewster Open Door throughout 2024.

Rabies:

- Rabies treatment was recommended for 34 potential cases, with 2 travelers for Colorado to Putnam County, for a total of 36 individuals treated.
- Thirty-four completed treatment, with two lost to follow-up.
- Pre-exposure vaccine was provided for 12 persons for prevention for travel or working with animals/wildlife.

Lead Prevention Program:

- 2046 children were tested for lead in 2024.

- 13 children with an elevated blood level of greater than 5 µg/dL are in Nursing case management as of December 2024.
- All children in case management are retested per the Lead Prevention protocol as outlined in letters to parents and pediatricians.
- 5 children with elevated lead levels in Putnam County were identified in 2023 as being associated with the FDA Advisory related to lead contamination in certain Cinnamon Apple Fruit Pouches. Four more cases were identified in 2024 for a total of 9 associated with that recall. PCDOH continues to monitor cases that have not had two consecutive blood lead tests below 5 and reporting continues to be sent to NYSDOH & CDC.

Maternal and Child Health:

The Maternal Child Health Program (MCH) continued to provide training and educational services to new parents through a holistic approach by offering support groups, classes, telephone consults, and home visits. Educational topics include general parenting, breastfeeding, diet, immunizations, disease control, lead poisoning prevention, sleep safety, postpartum depression, and child growth and development.

- Spanish speaking Certified Lactation Counselor (CLC).
- The MCH program continued to conduct the Child Find Program in partnership with Early Intervention monitors child development in at-risk children.
- The Nursing Division maintains a bilingual (English and Spanish) speaking nurse to meet the needs of our residents.
- Lactation services and breastfeeding support received 169 referrals with 244 home visits conducted.
- Child Find Program has 26 active cases, with 95 home visits conducted.
- New Moms group continues at the Mahopac Library. Groups provide peer support from other moms as well as breastfeeding support, parenting education, and educational presentations on a variety of topics by subject matter experts.
- In collaboration with Healthy Families, WIC and Putnam Hospital Center participated in a baby shower for the Brewster community.
- Revisited hospitals and pediatricians to update on the MCH and Child Find programs to educate on the services that are offered to the community.

Newborn Screening Program:

All newborns in New York State are screened before being discharged from the hospital for a variety of rare but serious disorders. All abnormalities that are found during these screenings are then reported to the NYSDOH. A Public Health Nurse in the PCDOH is notified and assists medical providers and families to ensure the findings are followed-up per NYS guidance.

- 4 cases referred for assistance
 - 2 cases retested by private practitioners
 - 3 cases within normal limits.
 - 1 case with abnormal (positive) results.

Community Outreach:

- PCDOH provided on information on HIV, EPT, STI, Immunizations, HPV, Lead, Emergency Preparedness and MRC, MCH, MRC, Tickborne disease, an seasonally offered services and programs (such as vaccine and/or rabies clinics, smoking cessation, and household hazardous waste day) at various community events including: Putnam PRIDE in June, Country Fest in July, Brewster Falls Festival, Carmel Fire Department Open House and Putnam Hospital Kids Day in September, as well as the hospital's October Health Fair.
- PCDOH attended the Mahopac ENL health fair at Mahopac High School and provided culturally and linguistically appropriate educational information on STI, HIV, immunizations including HPV, heathy relationships, lead poisoning prevention and upcoming PCDOH events including public flu clinics.
- PCDOH partnered with Planned Parenthood to offer STI/HIV testing in Garrison. The mobile health center offered STI/HIV testing, birth control and the HPV vaccine. Education was provided to clients on STI, HPV, HIV and healthy relationships. Safe sex kits were provided to clients.
- Two 8-week programs of Freedom from Smoking, an evidence-based smoking cessation program developed by the American Lung Association, were successfully facilitated by Nursing staff along with support from the Prevention Council of Putnam. These programs were provided free of cost for anyone who works or lives in Putnam County.

Department-wide Committees

Accreditation

- Completed the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) reaccreditation process in a department-wide effort and was awarded continued national accredited status.
- Developed and initiated plans to maintain accredited status.

CHA/CHIP

The CHA CHIP Committee was formed March 2024. Each division is represented, with the following goals;

- Increase department level input in Community Health Assessment (CHA) to produce a more useful, relevant product
- Increase engagement in Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) development across PCDOH divisions and with community partners
- Increase department and community level investment in the CHIP through shared decision making
- Committee members were oriented to CHA CHIP process and NYSDOH and PHAB requirements
- Developed SMARTIE goal and process to track departmental dissemination and utilization of community health assessment data
- Committee representatives joined the Live Healthy Putnam Coalition to increase CHA CHIP collaboration with community partners

- Collaborated with Nuvance to disseminate community health assessment surveys of Community Based Organizations (CBO) and residents for 2025-2030 CHA CHIP cycle

Communications

- Improved accessibility in communications on social media by formalizing the process of translating infographics into Spanish.
- Spearheaded branding enhancements internally at health department that included new PC letterhead and email signature, as well as new PHAB logo usage for social media and internal messages

Personnel

- Updates to the Employee Orientation Manual have been assigned.
- Working in group to update interview guidelines.

QIPM

- QIPM Coordinator hired in April 2024 to lead Quality Improvement and Performance Management initiatives.
- QIPM plan updated and disseminated to all staff in the third quarter of 2024, ensuring alignment with organizational goals.
- Plan, Do, Study, Act/(DSAs): The QIPM committee approved 2 PDSAs (EHS rabies electronic handbook and, improving customer satisfaction survey culture in PCDOH), Satisfaction Survey PDSA was completed in Nov. 2024.
- Alignment of QIPM with Strategic plan goals.
- QIPM training was reviewed and approved by the QIPM committee and sent to the Work Force Development committee for incorporation into the training schedule.
- Implementation of QIPM Fun Nugget series quarterly was introduced to engage staff and make QIPM activities enjoyable and accessible.
- QIPM committee to conduct a QIPM fair in Q1 2025 to further educate and engage staff on performance improvement concepts.

Strategic Plan

- Distributed the 2024-2028 Putnam County Department of Health Strategic Plan to all employees.
- Held our bi-annual department-wide Strategic Plan meeting in September, with a guest speaker from the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
- Utilized Microsoft Forms for the submission of Strategic Plan updates from other department-wide committees and assigned each committee a lead SP contact.

Workforce Development

- The Workforce Development Committee has completed the 2024-2029 WFD Plan based on the results of the TNA conducted in 2023. Trainings have been identified based on the TNA results and will be shared with staff 1Q 2025.
- The PHWINS staff morale and satisfaction survey was conducted in conjunction with the Beaumont Foundation of America. Results will be available in early 2025.
- All staff were asked to complete ICS training based on a recommendation from the Outbreak Committee.

VI. Staffing changes in 2024

- Early intervention is down one case worker, making caseloads higher than State standards.
- Nursing Division has been down 3 full-time nurses for most of 2024.
- Administration/Fiscal Division hired a new Office Assistant position.
- Continued utilizing the NYS Public Health Corps fellowship opportunities through a partnership with NYSDOH and Public Consulting Group to retain full-time fellows.
- Public Health Program Assistant Trainee was hired in Health Education.

VII. Sources of Revenue

- In addition to state aid, award and grant revenues, sources of revenue include: EHS permitting, fees, and fines as well as certain nursing clinical service fees.
- Notable Revenue for 2024:
 - PCDOH Adolescent Tobacco Use Prevention Act (ATUPA) enforcement activities collected \$27,950 in fines.
 - Year 11, NYSDOH Performance Incentive Program, PCDOH was awarded \$20,099
- PCDOH continues to conduct programs aligned with Article 6 of New York State Public Health Law, which enables partial reimbursement to local health departments for eligible expenses related to many public health services.

VIII. Goals for 2025

Early Intervention and Preschool Programs

- Open a cost-savings preschool program in Putnam County that would aim to bring most of the children currently being transported outside of the County, back to Putnam for high-quality, inclusive preschool education.
- Early Intervention plans to fill the full-time service coordinator vacancy.
- Fully evaluate the need for an additional full-time office assistant as well as a part-time service coordinator to assist with the burden of the new statewide system and the State and federal regulations and timelines.

Environmental Health Services

- Staff development continues to be a top priority for both succession and continuity of operations planning. EHS has two senior staff members with over 70 years combined public health program experience that are eligible to retire. Priority will be placed on staff training for program needs as well as analysis of staffing for new and emerging challenges.
- EHS will be filling 2 engineer positions and evaluating the need for Environmental Health Aide and Sanitarian positions
- The Solid Waste Manager will prepare a new county Solid Waste Management Plan, re-establish the Solid Waste and Recycling Task Force, and complete several other tasks that will assess and promote waste reduction, recycling and composting projects.

Fiscal/Administration

- Continue "Fiscal Fair" offerings for the Health Department staff.
- Modernize and streamline the timesheet/daysheet process. The goal is to provide all Health Department employees a new document utilizing a drop-down menu.

- Establish a computer tablet for the Front Desk for visitor Sign In and Sign Out.

Health Education

- Enhance adolescent tobacco prevention and education programs through ATUPA program and community partnerships.
- Launch vaping education and prevention traveling display.
- Implement 2 walking challenges for all county employees: adding “Walktober”
- Wellness Committee meetings will begin
- Wellness SharePoint page will go live
- Host two blood drives to address the blood shortage
- Expand education and collaboration related to addressing social determinants of health and health equity.
- Enhance coalitions to include members from underrepresented groups.
- Expand Trauma-Informed training offerings.
- Strengthen relationships with faith-based community and leadership.
- Incorporate trauma-informed and harm-reductionist approach to more health education programming.
- Build visual communication archive.
- Formalize photo and video shoot processes to enhance communications.
- Enhance database of gray sky media templates.
- Launch Employee Wellness Sharepoint with access to recipes, office stretches, and more.
- Prioritize community health improvement interventions and evaluate health education programs based on findings from 2025 CHA.
- Increase MRC recruitment and continue to expand MRC trainings and volunteer opportunities.
- Enhance PCDOH emergency preparedness trailer and shed equipment inventories.
- Write a departmental Integrated Preparedness Plan based off feedback from supervisors and managers.
- Continue to conduct communications drills to ensure staff readiness.
- Perform Medical Countermeasure (MCM) Distribution Plan/Public Health Asset Distribution (PHAD) Plan updates.
- Revise the MRC Orientation.
- Write an MRC Playbook.
- Write an MRC Spontaneous Volunteer Plan.
- Continue to enhance MRC educational and volunteering opportunities including an annual conference.

Epidemiology/Informatics

- Re-launch the Respiratory Virus Activity Report in an online interactive dashboard platform with inclusion of incidence rate by age charts, and improved functionality including the ability to filter by disease and year, and hover to view detailed weekly case counts.

- Continue to build outbreak investigation and response capacity and capabilities based on lessons learned from 2024 outbreaks.
- Complete all assessments required for the CHA, review findings, and compile required manuscript to be submitted to NYSDOH by year end.
- Maintain efforts to increase early childhood vaccination rates by supporting pediatric practice participation in intervention activities.
- Re-structure the population health initiative tracking system to align with categories included in the annual PHAB outcomes report. Work with programs to update initiatives goals based on 2024 metrics.

Nursing and Clinical Services

- Fill three full-time Public Health Nurse vacancies to return to full staffing and reimplementation of currently suspended services.
- Increase condom distribution to community partners by 20% to 6000.
- Expand the MCH New Mom's Group to Brewster Library as staffing allows.
- Develop a solid succession plan to account for multiple impending retirements in 2025.