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## **NEWS RELEASE**

**DATE:** March 27, 2020 1500  
**FROM:** Putnam County Office of Public Safety / EMA  
**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 Pandemic

The Putnam County Emergency Management (EMA) activated the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) for Putnam County on Friday, March 20, 2020. The purpose of the EOC is to help coordinate the county's response to limit the spread of COVID-19 and maintain medical care. Since this is a public health crisis, the Putnam County Health Department is the lead agency for the EOC. Kim Rieman, Putnam County Health Commissioner said, "Along with coordinating the response, the EOC also allows for clear and consistent messages about how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to be provided to the community." She added "The health and safety of our community is our main focus. The EOC provides an opportunity for agencies to work together to that end." During meetings of the EOC, local and state partners discuss how county agencies will continue to deliver essential services to Putnam County during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The EOC meetings are held with social distancing in mind, with many of the partners joining the meetings virtually, through phone conferencing. Regular 'virtual' meetings began earlier this month and include representatives from the Putnam County Health Department, EMA, EMS, Fire Department, 911 Coordinator, Putnam County Commissioners, Putnam County Prosecutor's Office, Mercy Putnam County Ambulatory Care representative, Putnam County Sheriff, Ohio EMA and Public Information Officers.

During the meetings, representatives give updates on protocol now in place for emergency responses, levels of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the county, and changes in closures and operations of different offices. Even though it is operating virtually, the EOC is still able to take and process requests for needs and can expand the operation should the need arise.

Conference calls and virtual meetings have also been held with the Putnam County Fire Departments, Putnam County EMS, and Putnam County Mayors. "During normal times, meetings with these representatives would be in person at the Putnam County EOC to prepare for an emergency," Mike Klear, EMA Director stated. "These virtual conference meetings have allowed us to work together to do all we can to ensure the health and safety of our residents."

The virtual EOC will remain in operation as long as necessary. "As we talk to the various groups in Putnam County we are better prepared for what may come," Klear said.

For more information about COVID-19, visit:  
coronavirus.ohio.gov  
coronavirus.gov  
putnamhealth.com