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*“Working towards a healthy and safe Putnam County”*

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Dear Local Real Estate Professional:

Re: Operation and Maintenance Permits and Water Samples

As trusted partners in property transactions, realtors play a key role in helping buyers and sellers understand the responsibilities that come with property ownership—especially when it involves a household sewage treatment system (HSTS), commonly referred to as a septic system.

In Ohio, many homes rely on these systems to safely treat and dispose of wastewater. Proper operation and maintenance are essential to protect public health, preserve property values, and prevent environmental contamination of groundwater and nearby waterways. Homeowners are responsible for ensuring their sewage treatment system is always functioning properly, which includes routine maintenance, system inspection, protecting the system area, etc.

In 2015, the Putnam County Health Department implemented the state-required Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Program for all properties with an HSTS. Each new HSTS is issued an O&M permit when the HSTS installation or alteration is finalized. 88% of all existing HSTS in Putnam County have been brought into the program over the past 9 years. Each permit is valid for 5 years and requires specific maintenance for the individual type of HSTS. Every property with an HSTS is required to have a valid O&M permit for the life of the system so the permit must be renewed every 5 years.

The Putnam County Health Department is asking for your help in educating your new home buyers of the O&M requirement. New home buyers are sometimes unaware of the O&M requirements and can be surprised when they realize they are now responsible for HSTS maintenance and maintaining an O&M permit. Any information that your sellers have regarding maintenance, schedules, contractors etc. of an HSTS can also be beneficial to share with new homeowners. If you or your clients have questions about sewage treatment systems, inspection requirements, or maintenance best practices, please contact us at 419-523-5608 or [PCHD@putnamhealth.com](mailto:PCHD@putnamhealth.com). We are happy to provide guidance and educational resources.

In addition, Putnam County Health Department provides water sample collection services. To schedule a water sample, please call or email to make an appointment. When an appointment is made, please ensure that you or your client knows what water test is needed. Please be advised that these samples are sent to a state-accredited lab and most sample results will be available the week following water sample collection. A sample fee is applicable for each water test.

Thank you for your partnership in promoting safe and healthy communities.

Sincerely,

Environmental Health Staff