

# Immediate Release

Putnam County Executive  
MaryEllen Odell  
845-808-1001

December 13, 2021

## County Executive Odell Announces:

### **EDUCATE, VACCINATE NO MANDATE**

### **Putnam County will not be enforcing an unrealistic Be Vaxed or Be Masked “Mandate” issued by NYS**

#### *Follow up statement:*

*Putnam County MaryEllen Odell released the following statement regarding New York State’s unrealistic mandate:*

Putnam County government, Health Department and Law Enforcement will not be enforcing Governor Kathy Hochul’s ***unrealistic mask mandate***, Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell said.

The “so-called mandate” that will go into effect Monday requires masks or proof of vaccination to enter all public spaces. Gov. Hochul’s order, issued through the New York State Health Department, called for private business owners and the Putnam County Department of Health to police the requirement.

“Our Main Street businesses have followed all the rules, from recommendations and guidelines to shutdowns throughout this pandemic in order to keep the public and their customers safe and healthy,” County Executive Odell said. “Now, in the midst of the holiday season, business owners are facing numerous operating issues including supply chain and hiring difficulties. We cannot expect them to implement this unrealistic order.”

Anyone seeking information on the mask mandate should contact the governor’s office.

In addition, our Department of Health is a team of health care professionals whose job is to educate and inform residents about the steps necessary to protect themselves. It is not a policing agency.

Here in Putnam County, the Health Department is working overtime to vaccinate our residents. Are we really supposed to stop them from running essential vaccine clinics and redirect them to checking whether the unvaccinated are entering buildings unmasked? The department is in the midst of arranging a private-public partnership to create a COVID testing site that will open at the Donald B. Smith campus in Carmel before Christmas and operate six days a week.

It’s not a wise use of resources, as any County Executive would have pointed out, had they been consulted.

Governor Hochul never consulted with County Executives before instituting a mandate that would force us to redeploy county resources that are essential for fighting the spread of COVID-19.

County Executives throughout the state had hoped that the change in the governor’s office would have led to an improved partnership between the state and its counties. Clearly, we are still waiting for that change.