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**BUYING A HOME WITH A PRIVATE WELL?
NEW WESTCHESTER LAW WILL MAKE SURE YOU KNOW IF THE WATER IS SAFE**

Anyone thinking of buying one of the 20,000 homes in Westchester County served by a private well will enjoy safer drinking water thanks to a new law taking effect on November 19. The law requires that a water test be conducted upon signing a contract of sale for any property served by a private drinking water well.

The law also requires that new private wells and private wells that have not been used to supply drinking water for a period of five years be tested before use. Private wells on leased properties must also be tested regularly. The test will ensure that the well water is safe for human consumption through analysis for the presence of coliform bacteria and chemical contaminants.

“This is an important step forward in protecting public health,” said Dr. Joshua Lipsman, Commissioner of Health for Westchester County. “New home buyers may assume that water from private wells is safe to drink, but we know that this is not always the case. When similar well water testing laws were enacted outside of Westchester County, many wells tested failed water quality standards.”

Under the new law, only certified laboratories are authorized to collect and test the water samples. Test results must be submitted to the Westchester County Health Department, as well as to the person requesting the test. The law also sets out the responsibilities of home sellers and buyers and other parties to ensure that drinking water quality problems are corrected, and establishes penalties for non-compliance. Information on the law is available on the Health Department’s website at www.westchestergov.com/health or by calling (914) 813-5000.