



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Senator Ritchie: River Hospital to Benefit From Senate-Passed Bill

PATTY RITCHIE June 20, 2011

Long-delayed change in payment rules could help preserve health care in the Thousand Islands

State Senator Patty Ritchie today announced Senate passage of a bill she cosponsored that helps secure the future of rural hospitals like River Hospital in Alexandria Bay, and Clifton Fine Hospital in Star Lake.

The bill, S.5431-A, will require the state to pay rural “critical access hospitals” for their actual costs of providing services, instead of relying on reimbursement formulas that currently leave the facilities shortchanged.

“The staff and board of directors of River Hospital have fought a heroic battle to keep this very important facility open to insure that the residents of the Thousand Islands region receive care when they need it,” Senator Ritchie said. “But current formulas shortchange hospitals like River, by paying less than they receive for the same services from private insurers and Medicare.”

“I recently toured River Hospital and saw firsthand the kind of outstanding care their doctors, nurses and staff provide every day,” Senator Ritchie said. “Hospital officials told me this reform was key to safeguarding their ability to continue to provide the excellent service and health care that people of our community have come to expect.”

Thirteen of New York's 43 rural hospitals—including River and Clifton Fine in Northern New York—are designated as "critical access hospitals," meaning they are located in underserved areas, have fewer than 50 beds, provide 24-hour access to emergency care, and have a record of efficient delivering of health care.

The bill has languished for several years without being enacted into law.