



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin S. Parker

## Senator Parker Addresses Mental Health Issues in New York State

KEVIN S. PARKER January 29, 2013

| ISSUE: **MENTAL HEALTH**



**For Immediate Release: January 29, 2013**

### **Senator Parker Addresses Mental Health Issues in New York State**

*Parker introduces a legislative package addressing the needs of the individuals affected by mental illness*

(Albany, NY) In concert with the New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services' advocacy day this Tuesday, January 29, 2013, Senator Parker unveiled a Mental Health and Mental Hygiene legislative package consisting of six pieces of legislation he

believes are necessary to improve the State's response to mental illness concerns. In his memo to his Senate colleagues Parker requests co-sponsorship of these bills and assistance in moving the bills forward in the legislative process.

"One of our core values as New Yorkers is that we protect our most vulnerable populations. The needs of people living with mental illnesses are not being sufficiently met and it is our job as state legislators to change that" stated Parker "I'm putting forth common sense legislation that creates parity in coverage with the mental and physical health worlds, destigmatizes mental illness, and strengthens our current laws," continued Parker.

"Senator Parker's proposals include a number of critical remedies to improving New York's mental health service system. Improving services to ethnic and minority populations will help us bring the promise of recovery to underserved groups and address unacceptable levels of homelessness and incarceration. Extending the reinvestment of savings from state hospital reductions will help ramp up our community safety net. We look forward to supporting these measures." Harvey Rosenthal executive director of the New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services (NYAPRS).

Legislation in this proposed package includes:

- Creation of a public education initiative designed to eliminate stigma and misinformation about mental illness and chemical dependence among military service members (S.1464/A.1965).
- Insurance coverage for mental health treatment for Family Health Plus and Healthy NY (S.825 and S.2779).

- Improvement in the current mental health service delivery model for ethnic and minority populations in New York State (S.852).
- The development of a two tiered service delivery model to target specific needs and provide quick response during crisis for persons with learning disabilities and other complex neurological impairments (S.989).
- Extending the New York State Community Mental Health Workforce Reinvestment Program and the Community Health Workforce Reinvestment Account for an additional seven years until March 31, 2020 (S.1466/A.1967).

“I have tailored the bills in this package to provide much needed services to individuals affected by mental illness,” the Senator continued.” “Instead of stigmatizing individuals with mental illness or masking the problems from which many suffer, we must help develop comprehensive programs that address these disabilities.”

“During my tenure as Chair of the New York State Assembly Mental Health Committee, I have been on the forefront advocating for the need of getting easier access to services, as well as getting additional services for individuals with mental disabilities. Even now as Chair of Cities Committee, those issues are still at the core of my legislative agenda. I am committed to working with Senator Parker and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to move these legislation forward to protect our State’s most vulnerable and under-served communities”, stated Assemblyman Felix W. Ortiz.

“I am proud to introduce legislation that will improve services to some of the most vulnerable citizens of our state,” says Parker. “I look forward to working with all of my colleagues to pass this legislative package,” he continued.

## **About Senator Kevin Parker**

He is the Ranking Member of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee, Assistant Democratic Leader for Intergovernmental Affairs, and Chair of the Democratic Task Force on New Americans.

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