



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Meets WITH Vets, Discusses Pfc. Joseph Dwyer Peer Support Program

PATTY RITCHIE March 18, 2013

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State Senator Patty Ritchie recently took part in Mental Health Awareness Day in Albany recently, speaking to veterans advocates and urging continued funding of the Pfc. Joseph Dwyer Peer Support Program for Veterans.

Advocating for mental health services for veterans, Senator Patty Ritchie addressed the Mental Health Association in New York State (MHANYS) and American Foundation for

Suicide Prevention (AFSP) at the Association's annual legislative lobby day rally in Albany.

The gathering of more than 300 mental health experts, advocates and family members, also included dozens of veterans from Suffolk and Nassau Counties.

Senator Ritchie spoke about the PFC Joseph Dwyer PTSD Peer-to-Peer Veterans Counseling program, a program she helped establish last year in four test counties (Suffolk, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Jefferson) which provides "peer-to-peer" counseling between veterans who personally understand the effects of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

Citing federal Veterans Administration statistics which show that up to 20 percent of Iraq and Afghan war veterans, 10 percent of Gulf War (Desert Storm), and 30 percent of Vietnam veterans experience PTSD, Senator Ritchie called for an immediate expansion of the Dwyer program so that veterans in other regions of the state can receive this service.

To read more about the program click [here](#). To watch Senator Ritchie's recent comments on the program, click [here](#).

(Senator Ritchie is pictured in the above photo with Carol Graham, the wife of Major General Mark Graham)