



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## **Legislature to Host Public Hearing on St. Lawrence Psych Center Tuesday**

Patty Ritchie

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State Senator Patty Ritchie is reminding people that a joint hearing hosted by members of the Senate Mental Health and Health Committees and Assembly Mental Health Committee will take place Tuesday, September 17 at 10:00 a.m. at City Hall in Ogdensburg.

The hearing takes place in the wake of the state Office of Mental Health's announcement of a plan to change the way mental health care is delivered in New York State; creating what they call "Centers of Excellence."

"Like many other people, I still have a great deal of concerns about this plan and what it will do to the availability of mental health care as well as employment opportunities here in the North Country," said Senator Ritchie.

"We want to make sure the services we have here—as well as the jobs—are protected. This hearing is an opportunity for community members to speak about the importance of the St. Lawrence Psych Center and share their stories of what the Center means to them, and their loved ones."

The hearing is one of several being held by the State Legislature in communities affected by the Centers of Excellence plan.

Senator Ritchie has been a strong supporter of the St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center, collecting more than 2,200 signatures in support of the facility and launching a postcard campaign that allowed for the delivery of more than 5,000 "Don't Shut the Lights Out on the North Country" postcards to Governor Cuomo and former Acting Commissioner Kristen Woodlock. She continues to work with community leaders as a member of the St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center Task Force.