



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara welcomes meeting with Cuomo administration on future of Elmira Psychiatric Center

THOMAS F. O'MARA November 26, 2013

| ISSUE: **MENTAL HEALTH**



Elmira, N.Y.— State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C-Big Flats) released the following statement on Tuesday's meeting at the Capitol with key Cuomo administration officials on the future of the Elmira Psychiatric Center:

"I appreciate the willingness of Governor Cuomo and his administration to listen directly to our local challenges, concerns and suggestions over the administration's proposed plan for the future of the Elmira Psychiatric Center.

"I'm hopeful that this face-to-face dialogue will encourage the Cuomo administration to go back and take another good, hard look at the case we're making for a stronger role for Elmira and Binghamton in the provision of mental health services across the Southern Tier, Finger Lakes and western New York.

“It was a valuable face-to-face listening session. It was a direct opportunity to keep making the case for the Elmira Psychiatric Center as an irreplaceable local employer and mental health service provider, and that’s important. It was a worthwhile discussion, in my view, and we agreed to keep working toward a more positive, common sense solution for the Southern Tier.

“The outpouring of grassroots support that’s been underway since the Cuomo administration’s July announcement has been critical to this effort to save the Elmira Psychiatric Center. We’ve kept attention focused on the overriding importance of Elmira to cost-effective, high-quality regional mental health care. These grassroots efforts make a difference and we have to do our best to keep them going.”

[Read more in today's [Star-Gazette](#)]

O'Mara, State Senate Deputy Majority Leader Tom Libous of Binghamton, area Assemblymen Chris Friend and Phil Palmesano, and a group of other state legislators whose districts would also be impacted by the state Office of Mental Health (OMH) reorganization plan met for approximately two hours at the Capitol with the governor's top aide, Secretary to the Governor Larry Schwartz, and other high-ranking Cuomo administration officials from the OMH, the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities and other state agencies.

Since the Cuomo administration announcement in early July that it plans to eliminate inpatient services at and diminish the overall role of the Elmira Psychiatric Center next year, O'Mara has joined other local government, business and community leaders to protest the move as devastating to the quality of regional mental health care, and to the local economy. Their efforts included [last Saturday's rally](#) at the Clemens Center in Elmira that drew hundreds of supporters.

Following Tuesday's meeting, O'Mara also reminded area residents that he's continuing to offer an online [“Join the Fight! To Save the Elmira Psychiatric Center”](#) petition on his Senate website. The online petition, together with an accompanying paper petition drive, has already drawn nearly 5,000 signees.