



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Statement on Plan to Save St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center

PATTY RITCHIE December 19, 2013

| ISSUE: [HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH, HEALTH CARE, HOSPITALS](#)

**SLPC =
EXCELLENCE**

For the people of the North Country, the St. Lawrence Psych Center has been a “Center of Excellence” for more than 100 years. With today’s announcement, we are ensuring it continues to play a central role in delivering that quality and compassionate care, and serving our community.

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE GOVERNOR'S PRESS RELEASE WITH DETAILS OF THE NEW SLPC PLAN](#)

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH JOHN MOORE'S TV-7 REPORT](#)

Six months ago, the state Office of Mental Health announced that it was transforming mental health services in Northern New York. And for six months, members of this community—including

clients, family members, employees and a far greater number of ordinary, concerned citizens—rallied, petitioned, organized and appealed for a better idea.

We set just three goals: maintaining inpatient mental health services in Northern New York; providing a stronger mental health safety net in our communities, and preserving and protecting critically needed local jobs.

Today, we achieved all three. With today's announcement, we are assured that North Country families won't have to endure an hours-long drive through dangerous winter storms to find appropriate care for our loved ones.

We can look forward to better, more rounded care for children and adolescents, and millions of dollars in new investments in community-based programs. We are protecting and preserving high-skills jobs that this community needs. We achieved OMH's goal, too, of transformation.

This entire process shined a bright light on the issue of mental health, how it impacts families and neighbors, and the valuable programs and services that are offered at this facility.

We have taken the issue of mental health care out of the shadows—and raised not only awareness, but support from this community, as well. The St. Lawrence Psych Center is a Center of Excellence because this community made it that way.

I would like to thank Governor Cuomo, who made it his mission to listen to this community's concerns, learn about the special role that the Psych Center plays here, and recognize that a flawed plan could be made better.

I would also like to thank the Task Force members who made such a convincing case for saving this facility and its services.

Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to the staff and business leaders, the parents and friends by the thousands who signed petitions, attended meetings, and raised their voices in support of the Psych Center.

We have come a long way, and now is our chance to work together to continue to make sure this facility lasts another 100 years.

