



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Senator Young to Hold Rally to Save Lake Shore Hospital

CATHARINE YOUNG January 4, 2014

| ISSUE: **AGING, HEALTH, HOSPITALS**

Keep Lake Shore **OPEN**

For Release: Immediate, January 3, 2014

Urging the Community to Attend in Force

IRVING - Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I-57th Senate District) announced today that she is organizing a rally to save Lake Shore Hospital at Silver Creek High School on Saturday, January 11 at 12:30 p.m.

The public is strongly urged to come to show their support, she said.

Senator Young said that Assemblymen Andrew Goodell and Joseph Giglio are co-hosting the event. Senator Mark Grisanti, Assemblyman David DiPietro, Congressman Tom Reed,

Chautauqua County Executive Vince Horrigan, and County Legislator George Borrello also will take part. The Seneca Nation of Indians, whose Cattaraugus Territory is adjacent to Lake Shore Hospital, will have a large presence. Medical personnel, emergency first responders, employees, labor and the community at large are expected to be out in force.

Turnout is key in having maximum impact to save the hospital, Senator Young said.

“We are urgently asking the community to join us to raise their voices in support. Our goal is to have a huge turnout so that Albany and all of Western New York takes notice. Rural health care is in terrible crisis, and the closure of Lake Shore is a real life example of why we need to take action. Lives are at stake with the loss of the emergency room and other vital health services. Patients will have to travel great distances on rural roads in all kinds of weather with tragic consequences,” Senator Young said.

“We are unified in our strong message that we need continued access to quality health care in our region. When you couple the loss of health care with the loss of jobs, it is devastating,” she said.

Senator Young said the recent success of rallies to repower the NRG plant in Dunkirk show that citizens can make a difference.

“We stood together to fight for our future, and we won. The united force of the people coming together is what made the repowering happen. We are hoping for a similar result for Lake Shore Hospital,” she said.

“That’s why we are asking the community to bring your family, friends and neighbors. Spread the word. We need you there,” Senator Young said.

Lake Shore Hospital, one of Chautauqua County’s largest employers, employed about 460 people when the intent to close was announced in mid-October by the parent organization Lake Erie Regional Health System of New York (LERHSNY), which has an affiliation with the University of Pittsburgh Medical System (UPMC). Brooks Hospital in Dunkirk and Tri-County Health in Gowanda also are under the LERHSNY umbrella.

In late October, the LERHSNY board voted to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy and TLC Health Network, the operator of Lake Shore, made it official in mid-December. TLC also has appointed John Galati as Lake Shore interim CEO.

Senator Young said the bankruptcy could turn out to be a positive development because it could allow TLC to restructure the hospital.

“The goal is to save as many critical hospital services as possible. The Chapter 11 filing gave us a little breathing room to find a qualified buyer who will have the best interests of the community at heart,” Senator Young said.

“The state has invested millions of dollars in the Lake Shore facility, including a recent \$2.6 million emergency room renovation paid for by a HEAL grant. It is an essential health care provider, and we want it to continue operating,” she said.

“If a qualified buyer steps up, we can save critical health care services and jobs, while protecting our investment on behalf of the taxpayers,” she said.

Senator Young said that state elected officials, especially Assemblymen Goodell and Giglio, have been in close contact with the state Department of Health (DOH) officials since the closure news broke. She and a DOH representative toured the facility in November so she could show him the emergency room upgrades.

“Our government representatives on all levels have been outstanding in their response,” she said.

“The new management at Lake Shore Hospital is doing everything it can to restructure operations in order to maintain a strong, fiscally viable, health care organization providing critical health care services to the residents on Silver Creek, Irving, Gowanda, Forestville, South Dayton, and the entire northeast quadrant of Chautauqua County. This rally sends an important message to the New York State Health Department, potential investors, and others that Lakeshore Hospital is a critical component of our health care system and has tremendous community support. I urge all concerned residents to attend the rally,” said Assemblyman Andy Goodell.

“Residents of the tri-county region deserve access to quality healthcare. That is why it is so important for our communities to rally together to preserve Lake Shore Hospital, its critical emergency care facility and jobs that are vital to our economy. Let’s send a clear message that we’re serious about preserving our access to quality healthcare,” said Assemblyman Joseph M. Giglio (R,C,I – Gowanda).

“I’m working with everyone involved to try to keep Lake Shore Hospital open. It’s a top priority for me,” said Assemblyman David DiPietro (R,C – East Aurora).

“The hospital plays a significant role in the overall health of the area and closure would have serious implications for Chautauqua County and beyond. Working with local and state partners we aim to protect hospital jobs, access to care and ensure that Southern Tier families aren't faced with long travel times in order to receive emergency care. With a strong,

unified message from the community, we have a real opportunity to make our voices heard to keep the hospital open and serving the community,” said Congressman Tom Reed.

“With the health and safety of area residents at stake, Lake Shore Hospital is too important to be allowed to close. Access to emergency care and essential health services for thousands of people would suffer if we lost Lake Shore Hospital, which is why there is so much concern and so many people are joining us in speaking out,” said Senator Mark Grisanti (R,I – Buffalo).

“Keeping essential health services available to our Northern Chautauqua County citizens is a top priority. I strongly encourage area residents to make their voices heard by attending the rally at Silver Creek High School to keep Lake Shore Hospital open,” said Chautauqua County Executive Vince Horrigan.

“I would like to see as many people in the community as possible turn out for this important rally. We need to send a strong message to Albany that this hospital must remain open,” said Chautauqua County Legislator George Borrello.

###