



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## O'Mara: Let's work to approve 'Compassionate Care Act'

THOMAS F. O'MARA March 4, 2014

| ISSUE: **HEALTH**



**Albany, N.Y., March 4**— State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C-Big Flats) said today that he will work with his Senate colleagues, on both sides of the aisle, this session to gain legislative approval of the "Compassionate Care Act" – landmark legislation that would create the most tightly regulated, highly restrictive medical marijuana system in the nation.

"This legislation allows for safe, limited access to medical marijuana, for people who suffer from serious, debilitating diseases. I will continue to work to improve the bill to make sure we maintain a balance between access and compassion for patients, and maintaining control to eliminate the potential black market," O'Mara said. "Comprehensive medical research and the ever-growing testimony from medical professionals, health care experts, patients and families show that the use of medical marijuana can help ease the pain and suffering of the

seriously ill. I have carefully considered the facts, and after meeting with patients and their families I have come to the conclusion it's time for New York to offer a highly restrictive, tightly regulated network to provide patients access to treatment that will improve their quality of life."

Gary Mervis, Chairman and Founder of [Camp Good Days](#), also expressed his support for making medical marijuana available in certain cases in New York State. For more than 35 years Camp Good Days, which operates a Recreational Facility on the shores of Keuka Lake in Branchport, New York in Yates County in O'Mara's district, has provided summer camping activities and other year-round events for children with cancer, and their families. Camp Good Days is one of the world's largest organizations of its kind whose programs and services have become models for cancer treatment centers throughout the United States and the world.

Mervis said, "I've devoted my adult life to the quest to find and develop new and better ways and methods to help ease the fears and treat the pain and suffering of children and adults facing cancer, together with their families and loved ones. We have a responsibility to recognize that in certain cases medical marijuana can make a difference for children with cancer and seriously ill patients of all ages. It can help improve the quality of their lives, which means it can help give them hope. We've reached the point in our medical advancement where we can administer this treatment safely and sensitively and with no unintended consequences whatsoever for society at large. It's a medical treatment that's effective. I'm strongly in favor of putting in place a system in New York State to make this treatment readily accessible to families who would like this chance to help their seriously ill children, as long as it is prescribed by a physician and regulated."

Andi Gladstone, Executive Director of the New York State Breast Cancer Network, said, "The New York State Breast Cancer Network applauds Senator O'Mara's decision to publicly support the Compassionate Care Act. By listening to the breast cancer community and others, Senator O'Mara has separated fact from myth, and he has brought us one step closer to passage of the Compassionate Care Act which will allow safe and legal relief to New Yorkers living each day with difficult illnesses and painful treatments."