



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Senator Young Secures \$5 Million in Funding for New York State Critical Access Hospitals

CATHARINE YOUNG April 1, 2014

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Critical Access Hospitals provide vital healthcare for rural communities

ALBANY – For the second year in a row, Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I-Olean), Chair of the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources, announced that she successfully secured funding crucial to the continued operation of New York’s Critical Access Hospitals.

“These facilities serve as a healthcare lifeline for many rural communities. The people they serve are reliant on the healthcare services they provide,” said Senator Young.

Rural hospitals are designated as Critical Access Hospitals if they meet a range of conditions in accordance with federal law. Most notably, they must provide access to 24-hour emergency care, seven days a week. They also must be located more than 35 miles in driving distance from another hospital. Alternatively, they can be more than 15 miles from another facility if they are located in an area of mountainous terrain. By that definition, these facilities are already geographically isolated, making them all the more important within the regions where they are found.

An example of a Critical Access Hospital can be found in Cuba Memorial Hospital located in Allegany County. It is one of the state's 16 Critical Access Hospitals. This facility provides a wide range of services to the community including urgent and acute care, as well as radiology, laboratory, rehabilitation and dental services. Many of the patients served by this hospital, and other hospitals like it, are those with the least financial resources.

“The closure of a Critical Access Hospital would only make it more difficult for patients to access the care they need, especially urgent care. The difference between life and death in an emergency can come down to mere minutes. Safeguarding Critical Access Hospitals will ensure that challenges in accessing care due to geographic isolation and difficult weather conditions are not further exacerbated,” said Senator Young.

Furthermore, these facilities are also key to the economic health of the region they serve. They are often one of the largest employers within their community. Their closure or downsizing would have a dramatic negative impact on the economic health of the region.

“In this year's budget, we have taken another important step in the process of strengthening healthcare within our rural areas. I will continue to support these vital institutions to ensure that the rural communities throughout New York State have access to the essential healthcare services they provide,” said Senator Young.