



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## State Budget Includes New Funding to Help Oswego County, Cny Fight Eee

PATTY RITCHIE May 1, 2014

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### **Three-Year Total of 'Fight the Bite' Funding Secured by Senator Ritchie Reaches \$700,000**

State Senator Patty Ritchie today announced that the new State Budget includes \$275,000 to help Oswego County and Central New York "Fight the Bite" and prevent the spread of Eastern equine encephalitis, the mosquito-borne illness commonly known as EEE

Over three years, Senator Ritchie has secured a total of \$700,000 in additional state budget funds for EEE prevention.

“Oswego County is a hotbed for EEE, and it’s so important that we remain vigilant in our work to protect ourselves from disease-spreading mosquitoes and prevent any future tragedies,” said Senator Ritchie. “I’m pleased to have been able to secure this funding, which will go a long way towards raising awareness of this deadly virus and increasing prevention efforts.”

Funding secured by Senator Ritchie will be used to support a number of prevention initiatives, including:

- Educating children and families about the dangers of EEE and how to protect themselves. In addition, students in all nine Oswego County school districts are receiving information distributed by Senator Ritchie, on EEE, and ways they can protect themselves from infection.
- Free tire recycling events where residents can dispose of waste tires, which act as breeding ground for mosquitoes. Last year, Oswego County residents disposed of 2,000 waste tires using EEE funding from the state, and new tire recycling events are scheduled on May 17 and June 14.
- Funding for mosquito control. The budget funding also can be used to pay for mosquito control spraying. In past years, Oswego County has contracted with companies to help control the population of potentially disease-carrying mosquitoes, and funds can be used to pay for a portion of that cost.
- Horse vaccination. While there is no vaccination for humans, EEE can be prevented in horses, and the state budget funds low-cost vaccination programs through veterinarians across the state.
- Finding a cure. The budget includes \$100,000 to fund a new 21<sup>st</sup> Century Work Group on Disease Elimination and Reduction within the state Department of Health. The group, comprising experts in diseases, infection and public health, will be tasked with pushing for the development of effective vaccines against diseases, including EEE, West Nile Virus and Lyme.

EEE affects horses and other livestock, and rarely occurs in humans. Five human deaths in New York since 1971 all have occurred in Oswego and Onondaga Counties, while dozens of horses have succumbed to the virus.

Following the death of Oswego County's 4-year old Maggie Sue Wilcox from the EEE virus, Senator Ritchie has been leading the effort to raise awareness of the disease and find ways to stop its spread.