



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Senator Griffo Announces Crisis Intervention Funding for Utica PD

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO October 28, 2014

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Law enforcement will be trained to handle incidents involving people with mental illness

UTICA – Sen. Joseph A. Griffo today announced that the City of Utica will be fully reimbursed for special training that will help law enforcement officers learn how to safely and more effectively handle situations involving individuals with psychiatric disabilities.

The state funds will help create a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) comprised of local law enforcement, mental health providers and advocates, and emergency services personnel. The

team will attend workshops featuring crisis intervention experts and other team members statewide, then bring the best ideas home to be implemented.

The new group will chart the current collaboration between law enforcement and the mental health system and identify which stakeholders could be included to address any gaps in development of the new plan.

The goal of the program is to train up to 20 percent of the Utica Police Department force, which will cost an estimated \$1,500 per officer. All money the city spends on developing its CIT will be reimbursed through funds set aside in the 2014-15 state budget. CIT programs typically provide 40 hours of training for law enforcement.

“Nationwide, many communities are recognizing that their police officers lack the training needed to identify various mental illnesses, make the appropriate intervention and get the individual the help they need,” said Griffo, R-Rome. “Crisis intervention teams have proven very successful in other places. I’m pleased to provide this opportunity to the Utica Police Department, without impacting the city taxpayers. This is a real chance to create a safer, more reliable outcome for both individuals with mental illness and the officers who interact with them regularly.”

“I thank Senator Griffo for his support of the Utica Police Department. This program will assist the department by providing them the specific tools needed in handling individuals who suffer from mental illness. It is essential that in order to protect themselves and the public that our officers have the best training possible and this funding provides that opportunity,” said city Mayor Robert Palmieri.

“Regularly, our officers are called upon to address situations involving members of the community who are suffering from mental illness. This funding opportunity will establish

training that will enhance our officers ability to deliver the appropriate services to community members in need, assist in the de-escalation of potentially violent situations and strengthen our partnerships with local mental health care providers. These partnerships will be successfully developed through the formation of CITs,” said city Deputy Police Chief John Toomey.

Other communities that will receive funding for this initiative include the cities of Auburn, Binghamton, Ogdensburg and Syracuse.