



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Announces \$185,000 for River Hospital and Watertown Ptsd Support Programs

PATTY RITCHIE June 4, 2015

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Funding Will Aid River Community Wellness Program and PFC Joseph Dwyer Peer Support Program for Veterans

Just days after Alexandria Bay's River Hospital was given the OK to continue its River Community Wellness program, State Senator Patty Ritchie announced that she has secured \$185,000 in funding to help the PTSD support initiative—as well as a similar program in Watertown—continue to serve troops and veterans.

“With such a significant portion of the North Country's population being made up of veterans and active duty troops, it's critically important that the men and women who have served in harm's way have a

shoulder to lean on when they return from war,” said Senator Ritchie.

“These programs are invaluable to active duty troops and veterans throughout our region and I’m thrilled to once again be able to provide funding so they can continue to serve individuals who have sacrificed so much in the name of protecting our freedom.”

Funding secured by Senator Ritchie will be split between the River Community Wellness Program, based at Alexandria Bay’s River Hospital and Watertown’s VETS Peer to Peer Outreach Center, an organization running the PFC Joseph Dwyer Peer Support Program for Veterans, a statewide PTSD support initiative created by Senator Ritchie and Rep. Lee Zeldin, a former State Senator and Army lieutenant who served in Iraq as part of the 82nd Airborne Division, who is now a member of Congress.

Recently, the River Community Wellness Program was in danger of shutting its doors, due to an Army-wide decision to move PTSD treatment programs back onto posts. Late last week, the program received word from the Army that Fort Drum will continue to send soldiers to the program for PTSD treatment.

“Here at River Hospital, we are grateful not only for the River Wellness Program being able to continue, but also for Senator Ritchie’s support of our efforts to help the brave men and women of our armed forces cope with PTSD and other combat related illnesses,” said River Hospital CEO Ben Moore.

“This aid is vital to helping those who serve our country along the road to recovery, and we cannot thank Senator Ritchie enough for her strong support throughout the past several years.”

This marks the third consecutive year Senator Ritchie has been able to secure funding for PFC Joseph Dwyer Peer Support Program for Veterans and the River Community Wellness Program. To date, she has delivered \$555,000 to support the two programs.