



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Announces \$70,000 in Funding for In-School Drug Prevention Efforts in Central and Northern NY

PATTY RITCHIE August 24, 2016



As students prepare to head back to the classroom, State Senator Patty Ritchie is announcing she has secured \$70,000 to help enhance in-school drug prevention efforts throughout Jefferson, Oswego and St. Lawrence Counties.

“The sooner we can teach children about the dangers of abusing drugs, the better the odds are that they will stay away from these deadly substances that have the power to destroy their lives,” said Senator Ritchie.

“I am pleased to again be able to provide funding that will help to educate children about the dangers of drugs, give them a shoulder to lean on—and someone to talk to—should they be faced with difficult situations involving these substances and ensure our region’s young people have bright futures.”

In Oswego County, funding secured by Senator Ritchie will allow anti-drug abuse counseling and education programs provided by Farnham Family Services—a not-for-profit, medically supervised, outpatient drug and alcohol treatment, intervention and prevention clinic—in local schools to continue. In recent years, budget cuts eliminated anti-drug programs in some local schools. To date, Senator Ritchie has secured \$120,000 to ensure the programs continue.

In Jefferson County, funding will help Pivot—formerly the Alcohol and Substance Abuse Council of Jefferson County—expand its Student Assistance Program, which places highly-trained addiction professionals in schools to provide support for students struggling with drug abuse and related issues. And in St. Lawrence County, funding will help to enhance anti-drug counseling services provided by the Seaway Valley Prevention Council in local schools.

“The future health and safety of our region’s children depends on the steps we take today to teach them about the serious, negative impacts that the use of drugs can have on their lives,” said Penny Morley, Prevention Services Director at Farnham Family Services. “Senator Ritchie has been instrumental in recent years in ensuring that anti-drug programs remain in Oswego County school districts, and we thank her for recognizing the importance of these programs, as well as for being a partner in our work to stop the spread of drugs in our region.”

“Pivot is on the front lines each and every day in the fight against drug abuse in our communities and it’s comforting to know that we have Senator Ritchie’s support in that

fight,” said Bill Bowman, Executive Director of Pivot. “Funding secured by Senator Ritchie will help expand our Student Assistance Program in Jefferson County schools and help to provide more of our region’s young people with the knowledge, skills and support they need to say ‘no’ to drugs.”

“Far too often, we hear of tragic stories involving children whose lives have been derailed—or worse, cut short—due to the abuse of drugs,” said St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES District Superintendent Thomas Burns. “We are thankful for this funding secured by Senator Ritchie, which will help us to get the anti-drug message to children sooner, and ultimately save lives, as well as protect the futures of students in our region.”

“At the Seaway Valley Prevention Council, one of our top priorities is making sure that young people are armed with the knowledge needed to steer clear of drugs and other dangerous substances,” said Larry Calkins, Executive Director of the Seaway Valley Prevention Council. “Funding secured by Senator Ritchie will help us to enhance the services we provide, and in turn, keep drugs out of our schools, as well as make our communities safer.”

As a member of the Senate Joint Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction, Senator Ritchie has been continuing to work to stop the spread of illegal substances in the region she represents, as well as across the state. Most recently, she successfully advocated for the passage of a package of bills that expand access to addiction treatment, improve the availability of life-saving medicines to reverse overdose effects and seek to raise awareness of the potential for abuse of prescription medications, which can lead to heroin abuse.