



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patrick M. Gallivan

Senator Gallivan Urges Colleagues to Keep WNY Children's Psychiatric Center as a Stand Alone Facility

JIM RANNEY March 27, 2017

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Senator Patrick M. Gallivan (R-C-I, Elma) and Assemblymember Michael Kearns (D, West Seneca) are urging fellow lawmakers to prevent the Office of Mental Health from closing the Western New York Children's Psychiatric Center in West Seneca and moving young patients to the Buffalo Psychiatric Center. Gallivan and Kearns say the move would jeopardize child and adolescent care and safety. They want to resolve the four-year old debate as part of the current state budget negotiations.

“The Children’s Psychiatric Center in West Seneca is rated among the best in the nation in the treatment of children and teens in need of behavioral health services,” Gallivan said. “I don’t understand why the Office of Mental Health insists on fixing something that is not broken. While the merger may save money, there appears to be no clinical reason to move these children to an adult facility and it isn’t fair to patients or their families.”

Two recent attacks involving patients at the Buffalo facility have also raised concerns about safety.

“Hearing reports of a nurse at Buffalo Psychiatric Center being attacked is disturbing, especially as the Governor and Office of Mental Health Commissioner Ann Sullivan continue to push to move the children at WNY Children’s Psychiatric Center in with the adults at Buffalo Psychiatric Center,” Kearns said. “Why should we trust that the children from the WNY Children Psychiatric Center will be safe at this facility, when employees at Buffalo Psychiatric Center aren’t even being kept safe? The evidence against this proposal to move these young, vulnerable patients to the Buffalo Psychiatric Center continues to mount and I urge Governor Cuomo, for the safety and well-being of these children, to put an end to this merger.”

Both Senator Gallivan and Assemblyman Kearns have introduced legislation, which would require the New York State Office of Mental Health to maintain the Western New York Children’s Psychiatric Center as a separate and distinct entity both organizationally and physically. Meanwhile, the Senate one house budget resolution and the Assembly one house budget resolution also include language that would keep the West Seneca facility open.

Over the past several years, former patients, family members of patients, workers, community activists and academics have pushed to keep the WNYCPC open. They argue the tranquil surrounding provided at the West Seneca campus is important for the children who

are undergoing significant mental trauma and the families desperately trying to protect these children from danger.