



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patrick M. Gallivan

## Senator Gallivan & Assemblyman Kearns Pass Legislation to Keep WNY Children's Psychiatric Center in West Seneca

JIM RANNEY June 16, 2017

| ISSUE: **CHILDREN, MENTAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**



On Friday, June 16<sup>th</sup> 2017, Senator Patrick Gallivan and Assemblyman Mickey Kearns joined by advocates of the WNY Children's Psychiatric Center, announced the passage of their legislation to block the merging of the WNY CPC with the Buffalo Psychiatric Center. The bill, which passed both the NYS Assembly and NYS Senate unanimously, prevents the merging of the WNY Children's Psychiatric Center with the Buffalo Psychiatric Center, by amending NYS Mental Health law. The bill prohibits the collocation of the WNYCPC and

requires it to be operated as a separate and distinct entity both organizationally and physically. With the bill making it through both the Assembly and Senate successfully, it now heads to Governor Cuomo for his signature to become law.

This comes as the Office of Mental Health continues plans to close the Children's Psychiatric Center in West Seneca and move those services to the adult Buffalo Psychiatric Center. Despite repeated urging from community activists and lawmakers, the Office of Mental Health has not provided detailed reasoning as to the necessity of this merger. Furthermore, medical reports and science have conclusively stated that youth and adolescents need to be treated separately from adults to receive the best care possible.

"Throughout our fight to keep the Western New York Children's Psychiatric Center in West Seneca, I have asked the Office of Mental Health to provide a clinical reason for merging this facility with the Buffalo Psychiatric Center," Senator Gallivan (R- Elma) said. "To date, no one has been able to explain how such a move would benefit the children treated here. This center is rated among the best in the nation and the idea of merging it with an adult facility in an urban setting is not fair to the children and families who need our care and support. I urge the governor to sign this legislation and keep Western New York CPC as a standalone facility."

"At the heart of this continued fight is doing what is best for the children and adolescents seeking treatment at the WNY Children's Psychiatric Center," said Assemblyman Mickey Kearns (D- West Seneca). "Throughout years of questioning, we have yet to hear any evidence as to whether there will be improved quality of care to these patients. These kids seeking treatment have already been put through experiences that no child should have to endure. They are seeking a calm, therapeutic environment to be treated and live a full, prosperous life. That simply is not possible if this facility is moved to the Buffalo Psychiatric Center, and that is why it is imperative Governor Cuomo sign this bill into law."

The Western New York Children's Psychiatric Center has received a 99.9% rating by the Joint Commission on Accredited health Care Organizations in 2012. WNYCPC was given a special designation as being in the top ten percent of hospitals accredited by the Joint Commission in the nation.

The Western New York Children's Psychiatric Center leads all other facilities treating children in the 30 day and 90 day readmission rates, a statistic which shows that the long term institutionalization and hospitalization costs are drastically reduced over the life course or lifespan of the person needing behavioral health services.

The WNY Children's Psychiatric Center is in a school-like setting. A rural and environmentally friendly environment is therapeutic for people with mental health disorders. Keeping the WNYCPC in this environment is more beneficial than relocating these children to a lockdown facility in an urban setting. The children are also in a school like setting which is extremely safe and therapeutic for the mental health disorders and challenges. Moving this facility will create long term aggregate losses to the state and harm the state's most vulnerable populations.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2017-S4630**

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- Introduced

- ◦ In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- ◦ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Vetoed By Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Relates to prohibiting the collocation of certain facilities

February 23, 2017

Vetoed

Sponsored by Patrick M. Gallivan

Do you support this bill?