



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## A Victory for CPC and WNY

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A community-wide effort to convince Governor Cuomo and the State Office of Mental Health to keep the Western New York Children's Psychiatric Center in West Seneca has finally paid off. Years of hard work on the part of numerous individuals, groups and organizations was rewarded earlier this month when the governor announced the state was scrapping plans to move the center to renovated space at the Buffalo Psychiatric Center.

While the timing of the announcement took many others and me by surprise, the governor's decision makes perfect sense. As advocates for WNYCPC have been arguing all along, the facility rates among the best in the country in treating children suffering from significant mental trauma. The safe, tranquil environment at the West Seneca location gives patients and family hope for the future. Our children deserve nothing less and I am grateful that these services will continue at the current location.

As many of you know, the fight to save WNYCPC involved people throughout the community who deserve credit. I was proud to work with former Assemblyman Mickey Kearns on this issue. After securing several extensions to keep the West Seneca site open, we introduced legislation in the New York State Legislature to block the move to the Buffalo Psychiatric Center permanently. Despite the unanimous approval of both the Senate and the Assembly, the governor vetoed the bill and plans for the relocation moved forward.

However, that setback did not deter the thousands of Western New Yorkers who simply would not give up on the West Seneca location. Residents signed petitions, wrote letters and attended rallies in support of CPC staying put. Patty Moran, Dave Chudy, Scott Dobe, Allison Scanlon and many others with the group Save Our WNY Children's Psychiatric Center shared their passion for the West Seneca facility, its dedicated staff and the services it provides. They never gave up and worked hard to keep the advocates up to date.

Members of the Public Employees Federation (PEF) and the Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) were also instrumental in gathering support for the West Seneca location. They joined the chorus in calling on the Office of Mental Health to reconsider the merger for the sake of the children.

Special thanks also goes to the families of current and former patients treated at WNYCPC. Their stories about the care provided at West Seneca and how the campus

offered hope at a time when they needed it most, gave all of us the energy needed to continue the fight.

Throughout this long process, our community spoke with one voice. In the end, Albany heard it. I thank everyone involved for helping to save the Children's Psychiatric Center in West Seneca. This is truly a victory for all of Western New York.