



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR


Thomas F. O'Mara

Reed, O'Mara and Palmesano sponsor forum in Penn Yan on mental health services: Shutdown at Soldiers & Sailors Hospital sounds the alarm among government reps, mental health providers and advocates

THOMAS F. O'MARA April 22, 2019

| ISSUE: **MENTAL HEALTH**


**CRISIS IN CARE:  
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES  
IN RURAL COMMUNITIES**  
*a Community Roundtable hosted by*



U.S. Representative  
**Tom Reed**



NYS Senator  
**Tom O'Mara**



NYS Assemblyman  
**Phil Palmesano**

Featuring a panel of regional leaders in community development, government, education, health care, and law enforcement to examine the need for accessible, affordable, efficient, and cost-effective mental health care in rural communities.

We share the widespread concern and care over a growing crisis and the lack of available services to respond to ever-increasing needs for mental health care.

**Penn Yan, N.Y., April 22**—Representative Tom Reed (R-NY), State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats), and State Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R,C,I-Corning) today sponsored a

community roundtable, “Crisis in Care: Mental Health Services in Rural Communities,” to bring together regional leaders for a discussion on the short- and long-term future of local mental health care.

The roundtable was held in the Yates County Auditorium and featured a panel of area leaders (see list below) in government, community development, education, law enforcement, and health care to examine the need and discuss strategies for providing mental health care in Yates County and the surrounding area.

In a joint statement, Reed, O’Mara, and Palmesano said, “We share the widespread concern and care over a growing crisis and the lack of available services to respond to ever-increasing needs for mental health care. Consequently, we appreciate this outpouring of community input. Rural communities and regions face unique obstacles to accessibility, efficiency, and cost effectiveness in this arena of care. Today’s roundtable highlights this community’s determination to face this challenge and find the best ways to address it.”

The area representatives said that community fears have been heightened since February when Finger Lakes Health announced that no new patients would be admitted to the 10-bed Inpatient Behavioral Health Unit at Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hospital in Penn Yan. **They share community concerns** that the lack of conveniently accessible, affordable, efficient, and cost-effective mental health care will worsen what is already a mental health crisis in Yates County and the surrounding area.

Since then, Reed, O’Mara, and Palmesano have urged Finger Lakes Health and the state Office of Mental Health (OMH) to work together to enhance the area’s mental health services.

Panelists participating in today’s discussion included:

Donna Bradbury, Associate Commissioner, Division of Integrated Community Services for Children and Families, NYS Office of Mental Health

Christina Doherty Smith, Director Western New York Field Office, NYS Office of Mental Health

Jose Acevedo, President and CEO, Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hospital

Ann McMullen, Immediate Past Chair and Board Members, Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hospital

Ardelle Bigos, Vice-President of Nursing, Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hospital

Deborah A Minor, Director of Public Health, Yates County Public Health & Schuyler County Public Health

George A. Roets, Director, Yates County Community Services

Sara Christensen, Deputy Director, Yates County Public Health & Schuyler County Public Health

Katie Roush, Director, Schuyler County Mental Health Clinic

Shawn Rosno, Director of Community Services, Schuyler County Health Services

Charlotte Jaynes, Budget and IT/Records Coordinator, Schuyler County Health Services

Undersheriff Howard Davis, Yates County Sheriff's Office

Jared Bailey, Chief Correction Officer, Yates County Sheriff's Office

Arlene Francis, Peer Services Coordinator, AspireHopeNY, Inc.

Dr. Ehmke, Medical Director, Cayuga Medical

Eric Jansen, Administrative Director, Cayuga Medical

Deb Raupers, VP Patient Services, Cayuga Medical

Jennifer Carlson, Deputy Executive Director, Finger Lakes Area Counseling & Recovery Agency (FLACRA)

Kelly Houck, Superintendent, Dundee Central School

Howard Dennis, Superintendent, Penn Yan Central School District

Elizabeth Nolan, Chief Operating Officer, Hillside Family of Agencies

Amy D. Miller, Commissioner, Yates County Department of Social Services

Laura Rossman, CEO, ProAction of Steuben and Yates, Inc.

Joseph Majauskas, Director of Behavioral Health, Eastern Region Rochester Regional Health

Colin Scantlin, Director of Acute Services, Rochester General