



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ensuring a Healthy Future for Our Military Heroes

SENATOR PATTY RITCHIE June 6, 2019

| ISSUE: **JOSEPH P. DWYER VETERANS PEER TO PEER PROGRAM**



### Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

For as long as our brave military members have been needed for battle missions overseas, these heroes have returned home with various challenges. One of the most common is post-traumatic stress disorder, commonly referred to as PTSD.

PTSD is a psychiatric disorder that can occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event. While PTSD can affect anyone who has experienced a trauma, a significant number of military members struggle with the disorder. Since 9/11, more than 2.7 million men

and women have served in Iraq and Afghanistan. The VA estimates that one fifth—or roughly 500,000—of those individuals suffer serious emotional problems.

During the month of June, the nation observes “PTSD Awareness Month.” During this time, we put a special focus on raising awareness of the disorder, and spreading the word that help is available for those who are in need of it.

Throughout my time as a State Senator, I have fought to ensure our military members have access to the treatment they need. That includes the Joseph P. Dwyer Veteran Services Peer-to-Peer Program, which I helped spearhead in 2012 alongside then-State Senator Lee Zeldin, a former Army lieutenant who served in Iraq and is now a member of Congress. Located in Watertown at the VETS Peer-to-Peer Outreach Center, this program helps connect veterans with others who have experienced similar trauma.

In addition, I have also been proud to support programming at Alexandria Bay’s River Hospital that provides outpatient mental health services designed for active duty military personnel and veterans struggling with PTSD. These programs help keep troops and veterans close to home while they are receiving the support they need to cope with the wounds of war.

During the month of June, I hope you will do your part to help raise awareness of PTSD and the services available to help those coping with it. For more information on national PTSD Awareness month, resources for individuals suffering from PTSD and tips on how you can become part of the effort to support those struggling check out the links below:

[VETS Peer to Peer Outreach Center](#)

[River Community Wellness Center](#)

[National Center for PTSD](#)