



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jen Metzger

# Senator Metzger Urges HealthAlliance to Return Vital Mental Health Services Back to Ulster County

[Jen Metzger](#)

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**Hudson Valley and Catskills, NY...**Last week, Senator Jen Metzger (SD-42) wrote a letter to Dr. Michael Doyle, the Executive Director and Chief Medical Officer of Hudson Valley Mental HealthAlliance requesting that HealthAlliance “commit to restoring, at the earliest possible date, the high-quality, locally-based, and accessible services that were previously provided in Kingston.” These services were temporarily transferred from HealthAlliance Hospital Mary's Avenue Campus in Kingston to Mid-Hudson Regional Hospital (MHRH) in Poughkeepsie as part of the emergency need to increase hospital capacity due to the COVID-19 pandemic. HealthAlliance is now seeking to make these changes permanent, which would leave

Ulster County without these vital mental health and substance abuse resources.

"With the closure of the units in Kingston, which included a 40-bed mental health unit and a 20-bed detox and rehab unit, Kingston emergency room patients in need of these services are now transported to MHRH or to facilities in the HealthAlliance network even further away. "This arrangement is not an acceptable long-term solution, as it places an unreasonable burden on emergency ambulance services to transport patients such distances, as well as on the family and friends of patients who must now travel a much greater distance to visit their loved ones," **said Senator Metzger.** "This is a particular hardship for disadvantaged families, many of whom rely on public transportation in Ulster County."

Metzger also noted that the temporary consolidation has resulted in a net reduction of 25 mental health-unit beds and 20 detox-unit beds. "Any move to make this reduction in capacity permanent is not justifiable, given current needs in Ulster County and in our region," **said Senator Metzger.** "Indeed, the needs are likely to increase, given the extraordinary toll that the pandemic and its economic impacts are taking on people's mental health."

A full copy of the letter, sent on May 18, 2020, can be viewed [HERE](#).