



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

## VET2VET FUNDING SUCCESSFULLY RELEASED AFTER BIPARTISAN PUSH

SUSAN SERINO March 5, 2021

| ISSUE: **JOSEPH P. DWYER VETERANS PEER TO PEER PROGRAM, VET2VET**



ALBANY, NY – After months of delay, Senator Sue Serino today announced that the \$4.5 million that had been designated for the Joseph P. Dwyer Peer-to-Peer Support Programs (Vet2Vet) across New York in the 2020-2021 State Budget has finally been released by the State Department of Budget. Dutchess and Putnam counties were designated to receive \$185,000 each to maintain their respective programs.

*“While we are all relieved to see that the funding designated for the Vet2Vet Programs in last year’s state budget has finally been released, these funds should never have been delayed in the first place,” said **Senator Serino**. “The Vet2Vet program saves lives, and with the tremendous bipartisan support behind it year after year, it should become a permanent part of every State Budget going forward. Budgets are always about priorities, and ensuring our veterans have consistent access to the resources they need to thrive here at home needs to be at the top of the list. I remain committed to fighting for full funding for this critical program as we move forward with this year’s State Budget process.”*

The Joseph P. Dwyer Peer-to-Peer Support Program began as a way to reach veterans living with PTSD, TBI, addiction or mental health challenges and is named after PFC Joseph Dwyer, a United States Army veteran, who lost his life to PTSD. This unique program offers non-clinical services to all veterans and works to help successfully reintegrate them into society and their home life. Vet2Vet is staffed by veterans who are able to relate to shared experiences and provide a hands-on approach.

This past February, Senator Serino joined a bipartisan group of lawmakers and veteran organizations from across the Hudson Valley at a virtual press conference to call for the immediate release of the 2020-2021 funding and for the program to be fully funded in the 2021-2022 State Budget. [To learn more about those efforts, click here.](#)

After being elected to office, Senator Serino met with area veterans through her Veterans Advisory Board who informed her of the Vet2Vet Program, and she was then successfully able to secure the funding to bring the program to Dutchess County. Since then, she has been able to preserve funding for both Dutchess and Putnam counties.

While the program was fully funded in the 2020-21 State Budget, the final budget passed with a catch that empowered the Governor to unilaterally cut or withhold funding for programs if the state’s budget become unbalanced. [Despite Serino’s outspoken push to restore the full funding](#) at the time, she ultimately voted against the budget because she did not believe this vital funding should ever be subject to such cuts.

For more information on the Vet2Vet program in Dutchess County, please [click here](#). For more information on the program in Putnam County, please [click here](#).