



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Statement from Senator Patty Ritchie on United Helpers Skilled Nursing Closure

PATTY RITCHIE June 15, 2021

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I am both devastated and heartbroken over United Helpers' decision to close its skilled nursing facility in Ogdensburg. For more than 100 years, United Helpers has been synonymous with quality care for the North Country's most vulnerable citizens. The decision to end over a century of caring for the elderly in Ogdensburg is a serious departure from its core mission.

United Helpers' skilled nursing home in Ogdensburg has been an integral part of the North Country's health care system for many years. It's no secret though that they, like so many other elder care facilities in New York State, are struggling and have been for some time.

In my role as state senator, I have done all I can to help them overcome the challenges they face. These efforts include and are not limited to regularly meeting with administration, carrying legislation to assist with the nursing shortage and to reduce the cost of operations and organizing meetings with top-level health officials in Albany to try to convince the state to provide them with the assistance they needed.

In addition, I have also advocated for the state to increase its Medicaid reimbursement rate, voicing my concerns on this issue to New York's Department of Health Commissioner at hearings in recent years. Despite the tireless efforts of organizations like United Helpers, the state's refusal to raise the reimbursement rate—which has not been increased since 2008—is causing our rural nursing homes to fail financially.

In the wake of this announcement, I stand ready to work with United Helpers and our state officials to do whatever I can to keep this important facility open and prevent residents from being forced to move away from their loved ones.