

2021-J2788

Senate Resolution No. 2788

BY: Senator BRESLIN

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending Richard J. Gallo upon the occasion of his retirement after a 50-year career in advocacy and government relations in New York State with a legacy defined by championing the enactment of some of the most consequential laws of the last half century related to enhancing access to care for mental health and substance use disorders

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize that the quality of life in the communities across this great State of New York is enriched by the diligence and compassionate commitment of those individuals whose singular purpose is the care and welfare of others; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend Richard J. Gallo upon the occasion of his retirement after a career spanning 50 years in advocacy and government relations in New York State representing an array of clients in health, human services and mental health including The New York State Psychiatric Association, the medical specialty society of over 4,000 psychiatrists and division of the American Psychiatric Association; and

WHEREAS, As the Director of Social Science Research Unit at the State University at Albany, Richard J. Gallo spearheaded the

establishment of an innovative internship program that placed students pursuing degrees in mental health related fields into yearlong internships at local not-for-profit and state agencies to gain invaluable hands-on experience and training to further their passion; a program that would go onto receive gubernatorial recognition and support; and

WHEREAS, Richard J. Gallo used his life-long desire and entrepreneurial drive to start his own business in 1972, Medical Service Marketing Group and Gallo Associates; as a sole proprietor, he represented a diverse array of clients over the years before the New York State Legislature and Executive branches, and worked with health and human service clients to prepare and file certificate of need applications to establish and open health care facilities in the community to enhance access to care including the application for the first ambulatory surgical center in the State; and

WHEREAS, Richard J. Gallo's career started on the frontlines of the intersection of policy and service with the Mental Health Association in New York State in 1966, a role that would go on to shape his character and career; and

WHEREAS, From 1986-1988, Richard J. Gallo was a member of the Nassau Town Board; in this capacity, he worked collaboratively to pass the most consequential zoning laws in the town's history preserving quality of life while balancing potential for economic growth; and

WHEREAS, In his representation of DaVita Kidney Care, the nation's leading provider of kidney care and treatment, Richard J. Gallo championed the passage and enactment of a law in 2007, that codified the only exception in the Public Health Law related to the establishment and ownership of dialysis centers by publicly traded companies providing a

critical infusion of support and capital enhancing to care for this life-sustaining care in communities across New York State; and

WHEREAS, Richard J. Gallo has steadfastly worked to assure the voice and perspective of mental health in deliberation of health care policy; he was instrumental in the passage of the law requiring the former State Hospital Review and Planning Council, the body codified in New York State Law, to evaluate the need for construction for health care facilities to include two members of the Mental Health Services Council, a precedent that continues with representation from the Behavioral Health Services Council on the Public Health and Health Planning Council; and

WHEREAS Richard J. Gallo's leadership and dedication contributed to the 2006 passage and enactment of New York's law requiring insurers and health plans to treat medical/surgical care and mental health and substance disorders equitably, known as Timothy's Law, an endeavor that was decades in the making and strategically undertaken by the Timothy's Law Campaign, coinciding with the federal passage of The Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008; and

WHEREAS, In 2007, the New York State Psychiatric Association awarded Richard J. Gallo with its Distinguished Service Award for his many contributions and accomplishments including enactment of New York's mental health parity law; and

WHEREAS, Richard J. Gallo's advocacy against discrimination against mental health and equitable treatment never ceased as he labored to make New York's mental health and substance use disorder parity law permanent in 2009 and continued in the decade and one-half after to enact measures to assure full implementation; and

WHEREAS, In 2011, the Mental Health Association of New York State honored Richard J. Gallo with the Leila Salmon Advocacy Award, which recognizes an individual advocate whose dedication and leadership has made an impact on the availability, accessibility, and/or delivery of mental health services nationally on behalf of NYS; and

WHEREAS, In 2018, to enhance compliance with the federal and state mental health and substance use disorder parity laws, Richard J. Gallo spearheaded a coalition of more than a dozen organizations to champion the passage and enactment of the precedent setting Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Parity Report Act, which compels all insurers, health plans, and behavioral health management companies, to submit key data to the Department of Financial Services on a biennial basis for analysis and evaluation of compliance with federal and state parity laws; and

WHEREAS In 2021, the Department of Financial Services used the 2017 data and analysis from Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Parity Report Act to fine three insurers \$3.1 million for non-compliance with federal and state mental health and substance use disorder parity laws,

a testament to the critical importance of the law and regular evaluation and analysis of compliance as these laws are an important bedrock in assuring access to care, which has never been more important as New Yorkers contend with the emotional toll of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, From 2010-2016, Richard J. Gallo, served on the board of Families Together in New York State (FTNYS), a family-run organization which represents families of children with social, emotional, behavioral and cross-systems challenges; he also served two terms as Chair of the Public Policy Committee, using his decades of experience to help shape and advance the organization's legislative and regulatory agenda and

harness the power of its membership to make their voices heard; and

WHEREAS, In 2017, Richard J. Gallo was named the FTNYS Advocate of the Year; and

WHEREAS, Richard J. Gallo's professionalism, keen sensibility, wisdom, and record of accomplishment has garnered the respect and mutual admiration of his colleagues, clients, and advocates alike; and

WHEREAS, Richard J. Gallo's extraordinary career spanned nine Governors, 12 Senate Majority Leaders, and 10 Assembly Speakers, a longevity characterized by his commitment to work with executives and legislators from both sides of the aisle in the interest of progress in public policy; and

WHEREAS, Richard J. Gallo's tireless efforts and notable achievements have significantly contributed to bettering the quality of life in his community; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his life, Richard J. Gallo has continuously displayed initiative and an unrelenting commitment when pursuing the highest of goals, and he has served as a role model of leadership to be emulated by all; and

WHEREAS, Richard J. Gallo's career exemplifies the words of New York's thirty-sixth governor and twenty-sixth president of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, who once said, "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who

does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat;" now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend Richard J. Gallo upon the occasion of his retirement after a 50-year career in advocacy and government relations in New York State, and to wish him continued success in all of his future endeavors; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Richard J. Gallo.