January 11th, 2017

Hon. Andrew Cuomo
Governor, New York State
The Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

The Western New York Children’s Psychiatric Center (WNYCPC) in West Seneca is critical to the care and treatment of emotionally disturbed children and their families. The West Seneca facility serves our most vulnerable citizens who deserve and require special treatment in an environment that allows them and their families to feel safe and offers hope for their future. We are writing to urge you to reverse efforts by the Office of Mental Health to consolidate WNYCPC with the Buffalo Psychiatric Center (BPC) and to consider alternative options.

On virtually every metric, this institution excels and exceeds similar institutions in New York State. WNYCPC has the lowest 30 and 90 day readmission rates and continues to outperform all other state run facilities. The tranquil surroundings provide a much needed pause for both the children who are undergoing significant mental trauma and the families desperately trying to protect them.

The Buffalo Psychiatric Center stopped treating children more than 40 years ago when doctors determined that adolescents have specific and special needs when it comes to mental health treatment. That is why the WNY Children’s Psychiatric Center was built. These needs have not changed and the decision of the Office of Mental Health must not be driven by money alone.

The Western New York Delegation, on behalf of the advocates with Save Our Western New York Children’s Psychiatric Center, is requesting that a portion of the funds set aside for the rehabilitation of the Strozzi building at BPC be invested in major capital upgrades on the WNYCPC campus, allowing the facility to remain open. You will recall that $8,000,000 had initially been included in WNYCPC’s FY12-13’s budget appropriation, but was swept when the BPC plan was initially proposed. WNYCPC has been notified by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations that the facility’s accreditation is as risk due to numerous safety code issues. As you know, the loss of such accreditation would directly impact the State’s ability to bill Medicaid and/or Medicare for services rendered at the facility. We ask that you please include an appropriation in the 2017-18 Executive Budget proposal of the necessary funding to complete the major capital upgrades at WNYCPC, an amount which advocates estimate to be approximately $4 million based on the most recent survey conducted by the Joint Commission.

Since taking office, your administration has been a partner in protecting the rights of those that often do not have a voice. We are hopeful that a solution, supported by an overwhelming majority of clinicians, advocates, and families in Western New York, can be reached which sustains the WNYCPC in West Seneca.

Thank you for your continued leadership and collaboration.

Sincerely,
Patrick M. Gallivan  
State Senate, 59th District

Michael H. Ranzenhofer  
State Senate, 61st District

Robert G. Ort  
State Senate, 62nd District

Timothy M. Kennedy  
State Senate, 63rd District

Thomas F. O’Mara  
State Senate, 58th District

Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes  
State Assembly, 141st District

David J. DiPietro  
State Assembly, 147th District

Raymond W. Walter  
State Assembly, 146th District

Michael J. Norris  
State Assembly, 144th District

Angelo J. Morinello  
State Assembly, 145th District

Michael P. Kearns  
State Assembly, 142nd District

Catharine M. Young  
State Senate, 57th District

Rich Funke  
State Senate, 55th District

Christopher L. Jacobs  
State Senate, 60th District

Frederick J. Akshar II  
State Senate, 52nd District

Robin Schimminger  
State Assembly, 140th District

Joseph M. Giglio  
State Assembly, 148th District

Stephen Hawley  
State Assembly, 139th District

Philip A. Palmesano  
State Assembly, 132nd District

Robert C. Oaks  
State Assembly, 130th District