

News from Senator George M. Borrello

57th Senate District

Representing Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, and portions of Livingston County

For Release: Immediate, January 31, 2020
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SENATOR BORRELLO, ASSEMBLYMAN GOODELL STAND WITH 1199SEIU HEALTHCARE WORKERS AND OTHER ALLIES TO PROTEST TLC/LAKESHORE CLOSURE ACTIONS IN DEFIANCE OF OMH

IRVING, NY – A coalition of community leaders, healthcare workers, and elected officials gathered at a press conference and rally today, coordinated by New York State Senator George Borrello, to call on the Board of Directors and administration of TLC/Lakeshore hospital to cease its move towards closure.

Just one week ago, the NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH) Project Review Committee stated that the hospital must remain open. The Committee cited the lack of a transition plan for meeting the region's mental health and health care needs as the reason for their decision.

However, the decision has not prompted hospital administration to pause or slow its closure process despite the threat of fines and regulatory enforcement by the NYS Office of Mental Health. TLC/Lakeshore management has continued its swift discharge and transfer of its remaining patients without a viable plan to provide healthcare services to our community.

“We call upon TLC's Board of Directors and Chairman Chris Lanski to set a plan that addresses the essential well being of our patients. It is our job to provide the best quality care for those in need of our services,” said Aubrey Cunningham 1199SEIU member and Behavioral Health counselor.

“It is disheartening that TLC/Lakeshore administration has decided to defy the directive of the medical professionals on the Project Review Committee and push ahead, uninterrupted, with their rapid closure agenda,” said Senator Borrello.

“Although the Committee determined that abandoning Lakeshore hospital without any plan for meeting the region's needs was not acceptable, we have heard nothing but a deafening silence from hospital leadership,” Senator Borrello continued. “While closure may be inevitable, a well-planned and fair transition period would assure the continuation of critical care services until a new provider can be secured. That is the process the people of this region and the hospital's dedicated healthcare workers deserve.”

“It's very hard to tell a patient who presents in a mental health crisis, that we can't admit them even though there are beds available,” said Steven Spears, (MSEd MHC) a Mental Health

Counselor on the Behavioral Health Unit. “As a healthcare worker, I am here to advocate for my patients who are in need of immediate care. This is devastating to our community.”

“OMH has not issued a decision regarding the application from Brooks-TLC to close the Hospital’s inpatient psychiatric unit,” said James Plastiras, spokesman for NYS OMH. “Therefore, TLC’s inpatient unit must remain open. Until it acts on the Comprehensive Prior Approval Review Application, any effective closure of the unit is contrary to OMH’s current position relative to the Hospital’s request. Should the Hospital close the inpatient unit without OMH approval, they will be subject to potential regulatory enforcement actions.”

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