



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shirley L. Huntley

Statement from State Senator Shirley Huntley, Chair of the Senate Committee on Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities

SHIRLEY L. HUNTLEY March 20, 2009

“Today a fatal fire claimed the lives of four mentally disabled patients under the state’s care at Riverview IRA, an upstate facility in Wells, NY.

My thoughts and prayers go out to all the families affected by this tragedy. I commend the firefighters and the Riverview staff for their efforts in this heartbreaking incident.

Members of the Office of Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD), State Office of General Services, NYS Police Bureau of Investigation, Department of State Fire Prevention and Control Unit remain on site to investigate the cause of the fire.

At this time I am in constant communication with members of the OMRDD as they are onsite conducting interviews. They have confirmed that four of the nine people involved in the fire have died, and the remaining five were taken to several area hospitals to receive medical evaluations— of which one has been admitted.”