



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ptsd Program for Jefferson County Vets to Launch in November

PATTY RITCHIE September 11, 2012

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### **Senator Ritchie Secures Funds for Program Named to Honor “9-11 Vet”**

A peer-support program for returning veterans suffering with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), made possible through a grant secured by State Senator Patty Ritchie, is coming to Jefferson County this November.

The PFC Joseph Dwyer Peer Support Program for Veterans is named for an Army soldier from New York who enlisted following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and who took his own life after returning home from Iraq.

Dwyer, an Army medic with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment, was famously featured in a widely seen photo carrying a 4-year-old Iraqi boy to safety during a raging battle in the early months of the war. While in Iraq, his unit was engaged in nearly daily gun battles for three weeks.

“9-11 reminds us all of the sacrifices that our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines make every day to protect our freedom,” said Senator Ritchie. “That’s why it’s especially important that we make sure that, when they come home, they receive the care they need to cope with the transition.”

The peer support program gives veterans a chance to interact with others who may be experiencing the same emotions and challenges caused by stress from combat and wartime service.

“Soldiers with PTSD are casualties of war, and this program gives suffering veterans someone to lean on, who may have been through the same hardships,” Senator Ritchie said.

Recent studies have shown that between 6 percent and 12.5 percent of returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans suffer from PTSD, and 62 percent have received some level of mental health care after coming home.

Persons suffering from PTSD are six times more likely to commit suicide.

Senator Ritchie, whose district includes the largest US military post east of the Mississippi River; Senator Lee Zeldin, a combat veteran and captain in the US Army Reserves, and Senator Roy McDonald, a Vietnam War veteran, jointly secured funding in this year’s state budget for the program.

Programs in four counties—Jefferson, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Suffolk—are each eligible to receive up to \$200,000 in state budget funds.

Locally, the program will be administered by the Jefferson County Community Services, which is seeking proposals from providers who wish to operate the program.

Interested agencies can obtain more information or an application by emailing Roger Ambrose, director of Jefferson County Community Services at [rogera@co.jefferson.ny.us](mailto:rogera@co.jefferson.ny.us). Applications must be submitted by October 15<sup>th</sup>, as the program is expected to be in operation by November 15<sup>th</sup>.