



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin S. Parker

## Senator Kevin Parker Urges Governor & Mayor to Train NYPD to Address Mental Health Population

KEVIN S. PARKER September 26, 2013

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(Brooklyn, NY) – At present, the New York Police Department (NYPD) is charged with dealing with approximately 100,000 annual 911 calls involving individuals with mental health concerns. These calls often result in traumatizing and sometimes tragic encounters between the police and individuals experiencing emotional distress. On Wednesday, September 25, 2013, at Noon, the Communities for Crisis Intervention Teams (CCIT NYC) called for creation of specially trained crisis intervention teams that can respond to the huge numbers of

emotionally disturbed person (EDP) calls the NYPD receive each year.

“We currently do not provide the training and protocols police officers need to properly respond to mental health incidents. As the old saying goes, “when all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail,” Senator Kevin Parker said. “So, police show up as the ‘hammer’ and respond to incidents involving mental health citizens as if it were a crime. We need a different set of protocols as opposed to treating all incidents as if they were crime-related. This is not about placing any blame on the police; I’m merely saying we need to work in conjunction with groups that deal with the mental health population so we can appropriately respond. That is why I am calling on the Governor, the Mayor and leaders of the Senate to support my bill in the upcoming legislative session,” the five-term Brooklyn lawmaker continued. “My bill creates a pilot program in New York City that brings together all the stakeholders including hospitals, police officers and community groups to assess the need and provide an action plan to execute the best protocols in these situations.”

Establishing a new community-police approach to EDP calls, should allow New York to avoid traumatic encounters and injuries to police and mental health recipients due to lack of the extensive training police need about handling a mental health recipient going through a crisis.

Steve Coe, CEO at Community Access, Inc., emphasized the importance of partnership and collaboration between CITs and the police. “We want the police and the mental health community to sit down and create a new system where police respond to crisis calls in a way that prevents injuries to police and mental health recipients. CIT models have worked well in cities around the nation; and now is the time to bring CITs to New York City.” Founded in 1974, Community Access empowers mental health consumers to reach their potentials. Their programs are a daily resource to more than 2,000 individuals and families who rely on them for affordable housing, self-help, and other services designed to help them gain new skills, lift themselves out of poverty, and lead healthy, independent lives.

#### *About Senator Kevin Parker*

Senator Kevin S. Parker is intimately familiar with the needs of his ethnically diverse Brooklyn community that consists of 318,000 constituents in Flatbush, East Flatbush, Midwood, Ditmas Park, Kensington, Windsor Terrace, and Park Slope. He is the Ranking Member of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee, Assistant Democratic Leader for Intergovernmental Affairs, and Chair of the Democratic Task Force on New

Americans.

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