



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Task Force Takes Fight to Save the Psych Center to the Capitol

PATTY RITCHIE December 10, 2013

| ISSUE: **HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH**



State Senator Patty Ritchie and members of the St. Lawrence Psych Center Task Force met with Gov. Cuomo Tuesday to discuss the Office of Mental Health's plan to change the future of mental health care in New York State.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH CH. 7's REPORT ON THE TASK FORCE MEETING WITH GOV. CUOMO](#)

The current plan would shrink the state's system of 24 psychiatric hospitals to just 15, with none located north or south of the Thruway, leaving millions of New Yorkers without sufficient nearby treatment options in their communities.

“Today’s meeting—which was attended not only by members of the St. Lawrence Psych Center Task Force, but also by representatives from Senate offices across the state—shows that we are unified against the current OMH closure plan,” said Senator Ritchie.

“I’m thankful that so many members of the Task Force made the trip to Albany to send a loud and clear message to our state’s leaders that this plan puts our most vulnerable citizens in danger and just doesn’t work.”

Senator Ritchie has been critical of the OMH plan because it would require families to travel 100 miles or more to find inpatient care for serious mental health issues, and because the state has offered nothing more than vague promises to improve community-based care.

Recently, Senator Ritchie announced the “Freeze Unsafe Closures Now Act,” (S.5986) which she jointly sponsors with Senator Thomas Libous, the Deputy Senate Leader, whose district is also hard hit by OMH’s plan. The measure is sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo of Binghamton.