



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Secures \$40,000 to Provide Anti-Drug Abuse Counseling, Education in Cny Schools

PATTY RITCHIE July 10, 2014

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### **Funding Will Expand Programs to All Oswego County School Districts**

State Senator Patty Ritchie has announced she has secured \$40,000 to restore anti-drug abuse counseling and education programs to all school districts in Oswego County.

Recent budget cuts have eliminated anti-drug counseling in many local schools and the lack of programs—especially for young people—was one of the top issues identified at Senator Ritchie's Heroin and Opioid Abuse Forum, which took place in Watertown in May.

"Making sure that people know the dangers of heroin and other life-threatening drugs, especially at a young age, is key to reining in New York State's heroin epidemic," said Senator Ritchie.

"The truth is that schools are very different places than they were even several years ago. Drugs are becoming more prevalent and we need programs like this to make sure students are equipped with the knowledge and common sense to say "no" when confronted with the option to use substances like heroin. I'm pleased to be able to provide this funding, which will go a long way towards protecting the young people of Central New York from the dangers of heroin and other deadly drugs."

The educational and counseling programs will be administered through Farnham Family Services, a not-for-profit, medically supervised, outpatient drug and alcohol treatment, intervention and prevention clinic located in Oswego County.

“Farnham Family Services is honored to be able to provide increased counseling services with the monies secured by Senator Ritchie,” said Penny Morley Prevention Services Director at Farnham Family Services.

“Providing intervention and prevention services create options for students so as not to make choices that would cause them future harm in a myriad of ways. Research is clear that the longer we can delay the first use/misuse of prescription drugs, tobacco, alcohol or any other drug the more likely a child is to not have a substance abuse problem later in life. We all aspire for our children to grow into healthy adults; having the additional support made possible by this funding can help us get them there.”

Currently, programs are offered in the following districts:

- Altmar-Parish Williamstown School District
- Mexico Academy and Central School District
- Phoenix Central School District
- Oswego City School District

Funding secured by Senator Ritchie will expand efforts to the following districts:

- Central Square Central School District
- Fulton City School District

- Hannibal Central School District
- Sandy Creek Central School District
- Pulaski Academy and Central School District

Across New York State and the United States, heroin use is on the rise. The number of deaths from heroin overdose has doubled across the state, and the numbers of users seeking treatment for heroin and opioid abuse in Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence County increased approximately 300 percent (434 percent in Oswego County) over a 10 year period.

As a member of the Senate Joint Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction, Senator Ritchie has been on the front lines of the fight against heroin. In May, Senator Ritchie hosted a Heroin and Opioid Abuse Forum in Watertown, where recovering addicts, law enforcement officials, drug treatment experts and friends and family members of users shared their suggestions for combating the drug. Most recently, legislation sponsored by Senator Ritchie to expand insurance coverage for treating heroin addiction was signed into law. The fight to access insurance coverage for treating heroin addiction was one of the top issues identified at her recent forum. Senator Ritchie's measure was part of an 11 bill package aimed at preventing and combating abuse.

