

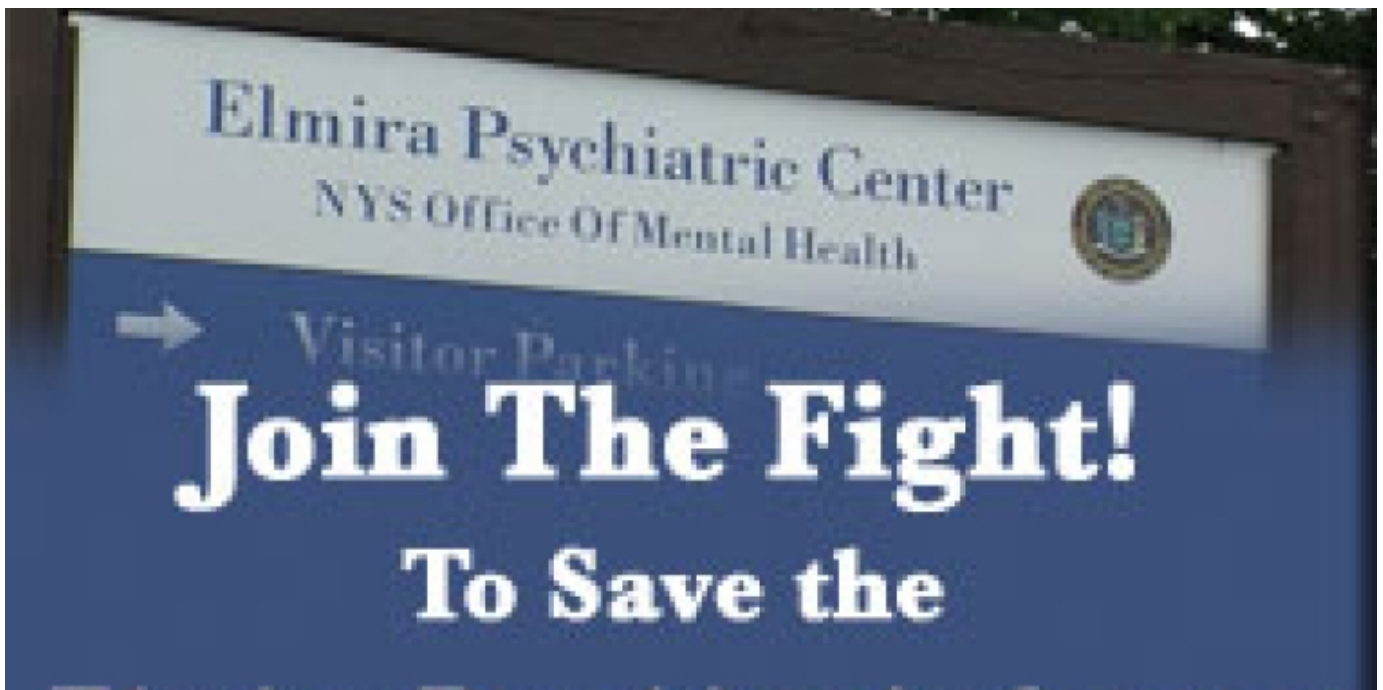


NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## Join The Fight!

THOMAS F. O'MARA July 22, 2013



An online “Join The Fight!” petition drive that I've recently started to rally public support for the continued operation of the Elmira Psychiatric Center (Elmira PC) is now nearing 1,000 supporters.

The response has grown day by day, and it's been very positive.

Most importantly, it's going to be very helpful to the overall effort to encourage Governor Cuomo and his administration to reconsider the future of the Elmira PC.

The state Office of Mental Health (OMH) recently released a comprehensive, statewide reorganization plan that will shut down inpatient services at the Elmira PC and psychiatric hospitals in eight other communities throughout New York, mostly upstate. The hospitals

will be closed and existing services consolidated within 15 “regional centers of excellence” OMH plans to open across the state.

Under the plan, Elmira PC, Buffalo PC and Western New York Children’s PC will be merged into one regional center known as the Great Lakes RCE that will be located in Buffalo. The plans calls for no inpatient services to remain at Elmira, but the center will continue as a “community hub” of the Great Lakes RCE and provide highly specialized community services.

I've been critical of the OMH plan for failing to recognize the central role that the Elmira PC has played in the delivery of an inpatient and outpatient network of mental health services over an 11-county region across the Southern Tier, Finger Lakes and western New York. I've stressed that the Elmira PC has been one of New York’s most cost effective, efficient, innovative and high quality mental health providers for decades and that the Cuomo administration plan fails to fully recognize the challenges of providing these services in the rural communities and regions where the Elmira PC has been successful.

We’re not about to give up the fight to somehow find a way to ensure that the Elmira PC’s tradition of care, prevention and treatment for patients and families throughout our rural communities is carried on. There simply isn’t a network of community-based organizations across this region to take the place of the Elmira PC.

To read more and Join The Fight! -- click [HERE](#).