



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie: Special Program Will Help Med School Students "Take a Look" at Careers in CNY, NNY

PATTY RITCHIE July 6, 2016



In an effort to strengthen health care in Central and Northern New York, State Senator Patty Ritchie has announced that planning is underway for tours that will help introduce medical students to potential careers in our region, as well as help rural hospitals struggling to recruit primary care doctors. According to a recent study by the Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYS), nearly three-quarters of rural hospitals across the state do not have enough primary care providers to meet current patient needs.

Made possible through \$100,000 in state budget funding Senator Ritchie successfully advocated for, “Take a Look” tours, which are being planned for the fall, will provide physician residents with the opportunity to visit hospitals, outpatient clinics or physician practices throughout Central and Northern New York and at the same time, help address the issue of physician shortages.

“There is a critical need for physicians in rural areas across New York State, and especially here in the North Country,” said Senator Ritchie, who serves as co-chair of the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources, a group that works to address challenges that are unique to rural parts of the state.

“By visiting the hospitals, clinics, and private practices in our region, physician residents will see the opportunities for professional development, along with the impact that they can have on the quality of life for their patients. This special opportunity will also give physician residents gain an understanding of what we all know – that Upstate New York is a great place to live, to work, and to raise their families.”

Organized by the Iroquois Healthcare Association, the “Take a Look” tours began last year. Thanks to new state budget funding, they will be able to continue, enhance their outreach to medical schools, and expand into Central and Northern New York.

“In an effort to promote the opportunities for physicians across beautiful Upstate New York, the hospitals and communities of the Iroquois Healthcare Association (IHA) and the physicians of the NYACP cordially invite physician residents to ‘Take a Look.’ IHA is grateful for the support of the Rural Resources Commission, and specifically to Senator Patty Ritchie, to expand the promotion of the region and the tours,” said Gary J. Fitzgerald, president and CEO of the IHA, which represents 54 hospitals and health systems in 32 counties.

“The Take a Look tour itinerary provides opportunities for residents to “take a look” and learn about the hospitals, physician practices, medical staffs, communities, and cultures in order to keep Upstate New York top of mind during the job search. These guided tours of the communities help to inspire physician residents to be reflective about their hopes and aspirations to find life balance and consider a rewarding career in rural communities.”

The recent HANYS study, which included responses from over 100 hospitals from around the state—with more than half from the Upstate region—also found that:

- 81 percent of hospitals indicated that primary care physicians are “very difficult to recruit;”
- In rural counties, the physician supply per 100,000 individuals is 81—compared to the state average of 114;
- Half of rural hospitals surveyed have had to reduce or eliminate services due to lack of provider ability; and
- Thirty percent of New York’s physicians are over the age of 60

Senator Ritchie’s work to bring the “Take a Look” tours to our region continues her efforts to strengthen rural health care. Most recently, she has been working with SUNY Canton to help address the issue of a lack of placements for local nursing students. Last month, Senator Ritchie brought together Canadian lawmakers and representatives from SUNY Canton to discuss the possibility of providing nursing students with clinical placements in Canadian hospitals.