



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Bill Cosponsored by Addabbo to Ensure Improved Mental Health Education in Schools Awaits Governor's Final Action

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR. July 18, 2016

Howard Beach, NY (July 18, 2016) Legislation (S.6046/A.3887) approved by both the Senate and Assembly before the end of the 2016 session would update New York law to ensure that mental health education is always an integral part of school health classes offered to students throughout the state, according to Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.

Addabbo, a co-sponsor of the bill and long-time member of the Senate Education Committee, noted that it has been four decades since New York's education laws began to call for health education instruction in schools.

"This legislation will help to codify existing law to underscore that instruction in mental health is integral to providing students with the comprehensive information they need to live happily and safely while avoiding high-risk behaviors," said Addabbo. "It's vital that our young people be taught that physical and mental health are deeply connected. Ensuring an emphasis on mental health instruction may help students recognize, in themselves and others, symptoms of depression, anxiety or suicidal thoughts and behaviors and provide more avenues for effective intervention."

Addabbo noted that school health classes focus on a variety of issues ranging from nutritional instruction, to sexual education, to lessons based on the dangers inherent in drug

and alcohol use and abuse.

“This legislation won’t change school curricula, but it will underscore that our young people need to know that physical and mental health are not mutually exclusive,” he said. “A broader and deeper understanding of these issues may also help to reduce the stigma often associated with mental health disorders and encourage our young people to seek help when they need it.”

The legislation passed both the Senate and Assembly in mid-June and must now be sent to Governor Cuomo to be signed into law or disapproved.