



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## Senator Kennedy Partners With Kaleida Health, Community and Elected Leaders to Launch New Blanket Drive to #WarmUpWNY's Youngest Patients

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY November 1, 2016

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*Doctors, Nurses & Young Patients Say Anxiety of Hospital Stays Can Be Eased by Simple Reminders of Home, Such as Blankets & Socks; Senator, Mayor, WNY Leaders Encourage Community to Donate*

*Unused Blankets and Socks to Remind Children They're Not Alone*

*Blanket Drive Begins As Women & Children's Hospital Kicks off New Healing Arts Initiative, Focused on Creating a More Physical, Mental and Emotional Healing Environment for Patients and Families*

BUFFALO, NY – Senator Tim Kennedy (D-Buffalo) joined Women & Children's Hospital of Buffalo (WCHOB) President Allegra Jaros and Vice President of Long Term Care at HighPointe on Michigan, Eugene Gonsiorek, along with Kaleida Health staff and local community and government leaders Tuesday to launch #WarmUpWNY, a new blanket drive designed to bring the comforts of home to our region's youngest patients during hospital stays. According to doctors, nurses and parents, it's common for young patients to become anxious over the "unknown" and the unfamiliar atmosphere that a trip to the hospital can bring. Yet through first-hand experience, they say that even the smallest and simplest item can remind kids of home and help to calm these growing nerves. While staff at WCHOB and HighPointe go above and beyond to make stays more comfortable and soothing, calming items such as warm blankets and socks are not a reimbursable expense, and therefore they rely entirely on the generosity of the community to provide this small comfort to children in their care. Due to the high volume of young patients these facilities see every day, keeping the supply of blankets stocked is often difficult, which is why Kennedy- and the community - decided to step in.

“At a time when kids should be decorating cookies, playing in the snow with friends and enjoying time at home with family, thousands of kids are entering Women & Children's Hospital of Buffalo and HighPointe for short term and extended stays due to an illness or injury. Wrapping a scared child with a warm and fuzzy blanket can often immediately put them at ease, helping them to find some peace and comfort during what may be the scariest time of their lives,” said **Senator Tim Kennedy**. “I’m proud to partner with Kaleida Health and our many other local and elected partners to launch this drive, and I encourage the Buffalo region to join us as we Warm Up Western New York’s littlest patients by donating unused blankets and socks for the children in our community who are spending time at the hospital this winter season.”

“We are so grateful to Senator Kennedy, our elected leaders and the entire community for rallying around our patients and our families,” said **Allegra C. Jaros, MBA, President, Women & Children’s Hospital of Buffalo**. “Our patients at Women & Children’s Hospital and HighPointe are so special to us. It’s wonderful to see these efforts around making both our short term and long term care patients’ experience more comfortable and homelike during the cold winter months.”

The drive will coincide with WCHOB’s new Healing Arts Initiative, which aims provide pediatric patients and families a physical, mental and emotional healing experience through integrated cultural collaboration and programming at the new John R. Oishei Children’s Hospital. Community members are encouraged to donate unused or homemade blankets and socks to collection sites listed below. Of particular need are blankets for infants, older teens and little boys. All items will be collected beginning November 1 and ending January 1.

### **LIST OF COLLECTION SITES**

Office of Senator Tim Kennedy, *2239 South Park Ave., Buffalo*

Office of Mayor Byron Brown, *Buffalo City Hall, 65 Niagara Square, Buffalo*

Office of Senator Patrick Gallivan, *59th District, 2721 Transit Rd. Suite 116, Elma*

Office of Senator Marc Panepinto, *60<sup>th</sup> District, 65 Court St. Room 213, Buffalo*

Office of Senator Michael Ranzenhofer, *61<sup>st</sup> District, 8203 Main St. Suite 4, Williamsville*

Office of Assemblywoman Crystal Peoples-Stokes, *141<sup>st</sup> District, 425 Michigan Ave., Buffalo*

Office of Assemblyman Michael Kearns, *142nd District, 1074 Union Rd., West Seneca*

Office of Assemblyman Sean Ryan, *149<sup>th</sup> District, 936 Delaware Ave., Buffalo*

Office of Assemblyman Ray Walter, *146th District, 5555 Main St., Clarence*

Office of Assemblyman David DiPietro, *147th District- 411 Main St., East Aurora*

Office of Legislator Barbara Miller Williams- *427 William St., Buffalo*

Office of Legislator Betty Jean Grant- *790 East Delavan, Buffalo*

Office of Legislator Tom Loughran- *4549 Main St., Suite 203 Amherst*

Office of Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz - *95 Franklin St., Buffalo*

Office of Lackawanna Mayor Geoff Szymanski- *714 Ridge Rd., Lackawanna*

Office of City of Tonawanda Mayor Rick Davis- *200 Niagara St., Tonawanda*

Cheektowaga Supervisor Diane Benczkowski- *3301 Broadway, Cheektowaga*

Office of Erie County Clerk Chris Jacobs, *92 Franklin St., Buffalo*

North Buffalo Community Center, *203 Sanders Rd., Buffalo*

Fruitbelt Coalition- *150 Maple St., Buffalo*

All Erie County Department of Motor Vehicle Locations:

- *Downtown Buffalo- 170 Pearl Street*

- *Eastern Hills Mall- 4545 Transit Road*
- *Urbandale Plaza- 2122 George Urban Blvd., Depew*
- *Sheridan Plaza- 2309 Eggert Road (corner of Sheridan), Town of Tonawanda*
- *ECC South- 4041 Southwestern Blvd., Building 7, Orchard Park*
- *Evans Town Hall- 8787 Erie Rd, Angola*