



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara reports extremely positive results from new state-supported study of treatment for veterans suffering from PTSD: O'Mara has worked with Corning doctor who is a driving force behind development of innovative, successful treatment

THOMAS F. O'MARA November 3, 2016

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Corning, N.Y., November 3—Over the past several years, State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) has led the call in the State Legislature for increased state funding to support the expansion of a groundbreaking treatment program for military servicemen and servicewomen suffering from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

O'Mara said today that the latest update from the program on treatment expansions being made possible by the state funding he helped secure as part of last year's state budget are extremely positive and successful, and further highlight the program's potential for helping thousands upon thousands of veterans in New York State and across the nation reclaim their lives.

O'Mara, noting studies that have shown that 30 percent of soldiers develop mental health concerns within three to four months of returning home, said, "I'm a believer in this program and New York State getting behind its expansion is proving to be a very beneficial and extremely positive investment. Post-traumatic stress disorder is a debilitating illness severely impacting the lives of thousands of our brave men and women returning from the battlefield. We have a high responsibility to provide our military men and women with treatments that can help them overcome the harrowing effects of PTSD and regain a healthy and productive life. The Research and Recognition Project is delivering effective advancements in this field. I'm convinced that ongoing financial support will help keep turning around the lives of more and more veterans and, by extension, the lives of their families and loved ones in New York State and across America."

The 2015-2016 state budget included \$800,000 to help expand the initiative, O'Mara said. The project is known as the Research & Recognition Project. The innovative, cutting-edge treatment, known as Reconsolidation of Traumatic Memories (RTM), has shown exciting and successful advances in the treatment of PTSD among veterans in New York State over the past several years at Fort Drum and other state facilities where it's being used.

The project's Executive Director is Dr. Frank J. Bourke of Corning, a clinical psychologist with more than three decades of experience in the field. O'Mara said that he's worked with Bourke over the past several years to help advance and promote the Research & Recognition Project in support of veterans and military families.

According to the project's latest report on treatments conducted over the past few years, and this year as the result of the new state funding, three scientifically rigorous studies, treating over 90 veterans with PTSD, have been completed and over 94% of all of the veterans who received the treatment in the studies had a complete cessation of nightmares, flashbacks and emotional problems directly related to the traumatic memories which are associated with PTSD. The last study, just completed, treated an additional 68 PTSD-affected veterans, and was a direct result of the latest state funding O'Mara secured. It resulted in 90% remission of PTSD diagnosis.

Bourke said that the treatment "has the potential for keeping 10,000 to 15,000 of our own New York veterans from enduring years of the debilitating effects of PTSD and freeing them from the need for State disability support. This will relieve New York State from expending many millions of dollars annually to treat and care for those veterans and their families."

According to Bourke, the state could "conservatively" save \$20 million annually over a ten-year period.

The program has drawn the support of veterans' advocates and medical professionals statewide.

The New York State Council of Veterans Organizations, which represents more than 30 individual veterans organizations throughout the state, wrote, "This project will anchor New York State as the home of an historic breakthrough in the treatment of post-traumatic stress

disorder (PTSD) and will provide the model for treatment nationally.”

Over the past three years, Bourke and his team at the Research and Recognition Project has collaborated with researchers at the State University of New York (SUNY) Upstate Medical University.

Dr. David C. Amberg of the SUNY Upstate Medical University wrote that the project’s recent work “suggests that this is a highly effective treatment...Continued development of the treatment method and the accompanying biomedical research would promote a number of advances in both the clinical treatment and cost-effective measurement of PTSD, which is a nationally recognized problem especially among military veterans.