



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Named to Leadership Post on Senate Health Committee

PATTY RITCHIE February 9, 2017



State Senator Patty Ritchie is announcing she has been named to a new leadership post on the Senate Health Committee, a position that will help her to more strongly advocate for improved health care for the people she represents across Central and Northern New York.

In her new role as Deputy Vice Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Health, Senator Ritchie will join fellow committee members in considering all legislation dealing with the health of New Yorkers.

“As someone who has spent her entire life in a rural part of New York State, I am keenly aware of the challenges we face when it comes to health care,” said Senator Ritchie.

“In recent years, I’ve worked to address some of those challenges—including taking steps to encourage more medical professionals to practice in our region, helping to secure funding to support key local health programs and working to improve access to health care. I’m excited that through this new leadership role, I will be able to continue those efforts to improve the health and well-being of all New Yorkers, and especially those who reside in Jefferson, Oswego and St. Lawrence Counties.”

In recent years, Senator Ritchie has worked to improve health care in the region she represents in a number of ways, including:

- Bringing “S-miles to Go,” a program that uses portable dental equipment and a mobile dental van, which are provided and staffed by the University at Buffalo’s School of Dental Medicine to Fairley Elementary School in Oswego County. The program delivers dental care to schools, especially in areas that have a shortage of available dental care;
- Securing funding for a “Take a Look Tour,” which provided downstate physician residents with the opportunity to visit hospitals, outpatient clinics or physician practices throughout Central and Northern New York;
- Sponsoring women’s health events through Jefferson, St. Lawrence and Oswego Counties, which provided dozens of women with free health screenings, including free mammograms;

- Working to meet the health needs of the region’s military population by securing funding totaling over \$700,000 over the course of four years for programs that support veterans and active duty troops who are struggling with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other combat related illnesses;
- Sponsoring legislation to support rural hospitals, including a measure that would strengthen what are known as “Critical Access Hospitals,” by allowing them to be paid on the basis of reasonable cost—the same way Medicare reimburses such hospitals—a change that would help ensure their long-range financial viability;
- Delivering nearly \$600,000 in funding to help local hospitals purchase equipment—including ultrasound equipment—as well as to strengthen services, including emergency and operating room services and maternity services.

In addition to her new leadership role on the Senate Health Committee, Senator Ritchie also serves as Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee and the Senate Select Committee on Libraries.