



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patrick M. Gallivan

## Senator Gallivan Introduces Legislation to Keep WNY Children's Psychiatric Center in West Seneca

JIM RANNEY February 28, 2017

| ISSUE: [WNYCPC](#), [MENTAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES](#)



Senator Patrick M. Gallivan (R-C-I, Elma) has introduced legislation which would require the New York State Office of Mental Health to maintain the Western New York Children's Psychiatric Center as a separate and distinct entity both organizationally and physically, preventing it from being merged with any other facility. The legislation (S4630) will amend the mental hygiene law and is the latest effort by Gallivan to stop plans by the Office of Mental Health from closing the West Seneca facility and transferring adolescent patients to

the Buffalo Psychiatric Center.

“We have repeatedly asked the Office of Mental Health to reconsider its plans to merge the Children’s Psychiatric Center with the Buffalo Psychiatric Center,” Gallivan said. “The West Seneca facility is rated among the best in the nation in the treatment of children and teens in need of behavioral health services. The proposal to move these vulnerable children into the same facility as adults is not based on clinical science and will jeopardize their treatment. While the proposed merger may save money, it simply is not fair to patients or their families.”

Assemblymember Michael Kearns (D, West Seneca) will introduce similar legislation in the Assembly.

“For several years Senator Gallivan, Senator Ortt, the WNY delegation and I have asked the Office of Mental Health and Governor Cuomo to stop the merging of the WNY Children’s Psychiatric Center with Buffalo Psychiatric Center,” Kearns said. “For some unexplained reason, they continue to move forward with this action, despite WNY Children’s Psychiatric Center rating the best of its kind in the state. Medical evidence clearly shows, when it comes to mental health, children need to be separate from adults to receive the best care. Since the Office of Mental Health and Governor seem to be ignoring these facts, and the pleas from patients, parents and the community to keep the facility open in West Seneca, I’m proud to introduce and advocate for this legislation in the Assembly.”

Senator Robert Ortt, (R-C-I, North Tonawanda) Chairman of the Senate Committee on Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities, is co-sponsoring the legislation.

“We have listened to countless former patients, families, employees and mental health professionals,” Ortt said. “Each group has expressed grave concerns over the potential

implications that such a merger of children into an adult setting will have on these vulnerable children as well as the precedent it will set for the future. Our foremost concern remains the children facing severe emotional, psychological, and physical trauma who have experienced negative adult behaviors. And it simply does not make sense to move forward with this merger."

Senator Gallivan will advocate for language from the Senate bill to be included in this year's NYS Budget. In January, Gallivan sent a letter to the governor urging him to keep the West Seneca Children's Psychiatric Center open and a bi-partisan group of Senators and Assemblymembers from across Western New York and the Finger Lakes region signed the letter in support of the facility.

Over the past several years, former patients, family members of patients, workers, community activists and academics have pushed to keep the WNYCPC open. They argue the tranquil surrounding provided at the West Seneca campus is important for the children who are undergoing significant mental trauma and the families desperately trying to protect these children from danger.

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RELATED LEGISLATION

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**2017-S4630**

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- Introduced
  
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
  
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
  
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
  
- Vetoed By Governor
  
- Signed By Governor
  
- 

Relates to prohibiting the collocation of certain facilities

February 23, 2017

Vetoed

Sponsored by **Patrick M. Gallivan**

Do you support this bill?