



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Calls for Improvements to Rural Health Care

BRIAN DWYER February 12, 2018

| ISSUE: **RURAL HEALTH CARE/DENTAL CARE**

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State Senator Patty Ritchie is calling on the New York State Department of Health to address a number of issues affecting health care in rural regions of our state.

During today's Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Health and Medicaid, Senator Ritchie—who serves as Deputy Vice Chair of the Senate Health Committee—raised a number of issues with Department of Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker, including a

shortage of nurses, efforts to attract medical professionals to rural parts of our state, state support for rural health care providers and recent nursing home closures, among other issues.

“New Yorkers—no matter where they live—should have easy access to quality, dependable health care,” said Senator Ritchie. “Despite efforts to improve rural health care, non-urban parts of our state still face a number of challenges. It is my hope that Commissioner Zucker will take the concerns I raised seriously, and look into what can be done to address them, which in turn will improve health care across rural sections of New York State.”

In recent years, Senator Ritchie has spearheaded a number of efforts to strengthen health care, including securing funds to help local providers purchase much-needed medical equipment, as well as to offer free screenings, for everything from breast cancer to lung cancer, to help people in our region.

Her recent work also includes cosponsoring legislation to boost rural hospitals. Currently, New York State Medicaid reimbursement rates are capped at lower than operational costs, creating financial stress for rurally located hospitals, also known as Critical Access Hospitals, which need to spread substantial fixed costs over a number of visits and admissions.

Under the measure cosponsored by Senator Ritchie (S.4536-A), Critical Access Hospitals would 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.

Video of Senator Ritchie questioning Commissioner Zucker at Monday’s hearing can be found by clicking [here](#).

2017-S4536A

- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Relates to payments to rural hospitals designated as critical access hospitals

February 16, 2017

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by [Pamela Helming](#)

Do you support this bill?