



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

## SENATOR HELMING DELIVERS CRITICAL FUNDING TO ADDRESS MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE DISORDERS IN JAILS, REDUCE RECIDIVISM

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Geneva, NY – Senator Pam Helming today announced funding for four county jails in the 54<sup>th</sup> Senate District to help support substance use disorder (SUD) treatment and transition services. Senator Helming advocated for and successfully secured this funding as part of the 2018-19 state budget. It will allow local sheriffs to implement, support, and expand these vital addiction and mental health services in our county jails.

"As State Senator, I have made it a priority to do all I can to keep our communities safe. Part of that is ensuring our county jails have the resources they need to provide critical mental health and addiction services. Earlier this year, I met with the county sheriffs and the county mental health directors in my district. They brought to my attention the effectiveness of providing mental health counseling and addiction treatment inside jails to help offenders stay in recovery upon their release . Thanks to their efforts, I am proud to announce this important statewide funding for county jail-based substance abuse disorder services. This funding will help support deputies and critical staff in Monroe, Ontario, Tompkins and Wayne County jails as they seek to rehabilitate offenders and reintegrate them back into society once they have served out their sentence. Working together, we can reduce recidivism thereby saving the taxpayers money and making our community safer for everyone," **Senator Pam Helming** said.

This funding is to be used for county PILOT programs. The information learned during the test period of these programs will be evaluated, shared with the state, and help direct future resources for similar programs. Funding to county jails in the 54<sup>th</sup> Senate District include:

- Monroe County - \$200,000
- Ontario County - \$156,000
- Tompkins County - \$156,000
- Wayne County - \$58,000

People suffering from addiction frequently come into contact with the criminal justice system. Incarceration provides a unique opportunity to offer treatment supports during periods when people are clean and sober. However, more than half (51%) of New York State jails report that they have no funding for SUD treatment services, despite strong evidence

that these services reduce crime, save taxpayers money, and save lives. County jails that do offer treatment services have seen significant benefits including decreased recidivism rates and costs savings. For example, in Albany County, the SHARP (Sheriff's Heroin Addiction Recovery Program) program has reduced re-incarceration by 28 percent for those who participated in the treatment program. New York State's own analysis by DCJS of the costs and benefits of jail-based SUD treatment found that communities realize a savings of \$2,846 per person served and that there are 13 fewer victimizations per 100 people served.

Localities across the state rely heavily on county budgets and pharmaceutical donations to sustain what little services are currently offered. Fifty-one percent of jails have no funding for substance use treatment services. Additionally, 53 percent of jails do not have the capacity to directly transition addicted inmates to community treatment programs upon re-entry to the community. These services minimize the possibility of recidivism and overdosing. Even for jails with treatment programs, the escalating need outpaces the services available.

**Ontario County Sheriff Phil Povero** said, "Substance abuse controls the lives of a majority of persons incarcerated in the Ontario County Jail. This funding will support treatment and a community re-entry plan for the inmate. Ultimately, our goal is to reduce recidivism and allow the former inmate to lead a productive life. I thank Senator Helming for fighting to get this funding back to Ontario County."

**Wayne County Sheriff Barry Virts**, said, "Our Wayne County Sheriff's Office Jail Facility houses an inmate population that is mentally ill and chemically addicted (MICA) and many have other severe diagnosed mental illnesses. Roughly 5% of our inmate population is sentence to state prison, the remainder are eventually released to our communities in Wayne

County. Our partnership with the Wayne Behavioral Health Network in providing substance abuse and mental health services in the jail facility, and their ability to assist those in need of substance abuse and mental health services throughout our Wayne County communities is critical to assist those in need of services, their families and for the quality of life for all of our community members. I am grateful for this funding.”

“Thank you to our New York State Senate delegation and all legislators who listened to our concerns and understand the critical opioid epidemic that is on our doorstep,” said **Monroe County Sheriff Todd K. Baxter**. “We are most appreciative of these monies which will aid in the treatment and prevention of the heroin crisis in our community, including the struggle many of those incarcerated in the Monroe County Jail face daily. The road for those battling addiction, and their families, is not easy. Know that these funds will be put to great use to provide essential programming, treatment, and ongoing education to help lead to a path of recovery. All of us are impacted by this crisis; our families, our neighbors, our friends, our congregations. We must all be part of the solution. We are extremely grateful for these funds that provide, beyond everything, hope.”

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