



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Announces Funding for Local MASH Camps to Encourage Area Students to Pursue Medical Careers

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In an effort to encourage more of our region's young people to pursue medical careers and enhance current care for Fort Drum families, as well as civilian residents in the North Country, State Senator Patty Ritchie is announcing she has secured funding for the Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization (FDRHPO).

A portion of the support secured by Senator Ritchie—totaling \$15,000—will help the organization expand its popular Medical Academy of Science and Health (MASH) Camp, which allows students entering grades 8-12 to not only see firsthand, what health professionals do each day, but also allows them to participate in interactive, hands-on activities that highlight various career opportunities.

In addition, the funding will also allow FDRHPO—an agency that analyzes the existing healthcare system available to Fort Drum soldiers, their families and the civilian community—to purchase a number of iPads that help improve the efficiency of staff members who provide services to various practices throughout the region.

“Every single day I see just how important the relationship between Fort Drum and the North Country is—and that’s especially true when it comes to health care,” said Senator Ritchie. “I am pleased to have secured this funding, which will not only help encourage young people to pursue local careers in medicine, but also improve the efficiency of the North Country’s health care system for Fort Drum soldiers, their families and civilian residents.”

“Senator Richie has a history of not only listening to the priorities of her constituents, but also acquiring support for meaningful initiatives within the Fort Drum region,” FDRHPO Executive Director Erika F. Flint said. “MASH Camps are a long-term approach to ensuring the healthcare needs of our community are met with a local workforce by exposing our youth to high-quality employment opportunities. The senator’s efforts to help soldiers, their families, and the overall health of this community is recognized and appreciated.”

This year, the MASH Camps served more than 125 students. FDRHPO will offer its next round of camps over winter break in February. The application process is now open. More information about the camps and application process can be found on the [FDPHPO’s website](#).

Resources secured by Senator Ritchie comes from the most recent state budget's "Military Base Retention Fund," which Senator Ritchie played a key role in developing in 2012. Since its creation, it has helped to support a number of projects key to protecting the future of the installation, including those related to improving health care for soldiers and families, enhancing the operations of fire departments and first responders serving Fort Drum and surrounding communities and establishing "buffer areas" around the installation's perimeter to prevent development from encroaching on key training areas.