



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jen Metzger

## Senator Metzger Questions DOH Commissioner on Mental Health Support for Healthcare Workers and Shortage of PPE Storage Capacity in Rural Hospitals in a Joint Legislative Hearing on Hospitals during COVID-19

JEN METZGER August 13, 2020

| ISSUE: [CORONAVIRUS](#), [COVID-19](#), [HOSPITALS](#), [MENTAL HEALTH](#), [PPE](#)



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*With a potential second wave of COVID-19 as well as flu season on the horizon, we need to know what steps the Department of Health is taking, drawing from the hard lessons learned since March, to support the physical and mental health needs of our nurses and hospital workers, many of whom endured a working environment and stress on the job during this pandemic that few of us can imagine--particularly in hard-hit areas of the state. We need to make sure that those caring for our health and well-being are cared for as well."*

***On PPE, Metzger commented,** "it is vital that hospitals head into the fall with sufficient reserves of personal protective equipment (PPE) in the event of another surge to protect hospital staff and patients and prevent the spread of infection. Hospitals are now required to have a 90-day supply on site by the end of September, and we must make sure that they are able to procure the necessary supplies and have the storage space available to meet this requirement. At least one hospital in my district is faced with a shortage of storage space, and is concerned about its ability to comply. The state may need to consider regional storage distribution points to address this issue."*

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Health, Investigations and Government Operations Committees and Administrative Regulations Review Commissions of the State Senate and Assembly held a public hearing on Wednesday to review the impact of COVID-19 on hospitals in New York State as well as how current hospital policies impacted the approach to addressing the COVID-19 pandemic with a goal of identifying what steps can be taken to prepare the hospital system as well as protect patients and staff in the event of potential future pandemics. Senator Jen Metzger (SD-42), a member of the Senate Health Committee, participated in the hearing and questioned New York State Department of Health (DOH) Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker on plans to address the mental and physical health needs of healthcare workers, as well as issues of storage capacity and procurement obstacles in hospitals' efforts to obtain the required 90-day reserve of personal protective equipment (PPE).

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A full recording of the hearing can be found [here](#).

*Jen Metzger represents the 42<sup>nd</sup> Senate District, which includes all of Sullivan County and parts of Delaware, Orange, and Ulster Counties. Senator Metzger serves as Chair of the Agriculture Committee and sits on the Environmental Conservation, Education, Health, Energy and Telecommunications, Local Government, Women's Issues, Domestic Animal Welfare, and Legislative Commission on Rural Resources Committees.*

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