

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK
SENATOR PATRICK M. GALLIVAN
59TH DISTRICT

February 24, 2015

The Honorable Dean G. Skelos
Majority Leader, New York State Senate
909 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Majority Leader  Skelos:

Your support is requested to *reject* the Executive Budget's recommendations to: (1) decrease the number of State-operated psychiatric center inpatient beds by 137 in 2016; and (2) re-examine the closure of the Western New York Children's Psychiatric Center, and to relocate those beds to the Buffalo Psychiatric Center, an adult facility.

The Western New York Children's Psychiatric Center was rated in the top 10 percent of hospitals accredited by the Joint Commission in the Nation in 2012, and treats seriously emotionally disturbed children between the ages of 4 and 18 from 19 counties across the State. The Center's current location in West Seneca is therapeutically designed for children and youth with severe emotional problems.

Moving the youth patients to the Buffalo Psychiatric Center would be detrimental to their treatment. Instead of having access to a therapeutically designed campus, the children would be restricted to two floors of an 8-story institutional building housing adult psychiatric patients. These adult patients include Level 3 sex offenders. The proposal would also reduce the number of beds for youth patients from 46 to 36, even though there is currently a waiting list for treatment.

Children were moved out of adult psychiatric centers 50 years ago because it was found to not be beneficial or therapeutic to have youth patients, many of whom are victims of physical and sexual abuse, living among the adult patients. It is in the best interest of these young patients to keep the WNY Children's Psychiatric Center open. Should the plans move forward as stated in the Executive Budget, the likelihood of these children being re-institutionalized would greatly increase and so to would the costs to New York State.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you have any questions or concerns regarding this program. Thank you for your time and attention to this issue.

Sincerely,


Patrick M. Gallivan
Senator, 59th District

CC: Robert Mujica, Secretary of the Senate Finance Committee