



ADDITIONAL OFFICES:
155 SUMMER STREET
BUFFALO, NY 14222

43 CENTRAL AVENUE
LANCASTER, NY 14086

770 DAVISON ROAD
LOCKPORT, NY 14094

MAIN OFFICE:
2410 NORTH FOREST ROAD | SUITE 301 | AMHERST, NEW YORK 14068
PHONE: 716.636.7600 | TOLL FREE: 800.636.5255 | FAX: 716.636.7606

WWW.HOGANWILLIG.COM
SERVICE BY FAX AND EMAIL NOT ACCEPTED

For Release
July 13, 2017

Media Contact Only
Steve Reszka, Reszka & Associates
716-632-8070 (o)/716-560-2295 (c)

WNY Group Files Lawsuit To Prevent Children's Psychiatric Center Move

WEST SENECA, NY – The Coalition to Save the Children's Psychiatric Center filed a lawsuit to prevent Governor Cuomo from closing the West Seneca facility and combining it with the Buffalo Psychiatric Center.

The move is opposed by staff, families, former patients, community groups and elected officials at the town, county and state levels citing medical and safety issues.

Last month both the New York State Assembly *and* Senate unanimously approved legislation blocking Governor Cuomo's recommended closing of the center in West Seneca. The legislation also prevents the transfer of patients to the Buffalo Psychiatric Center.

The lawsuit seeks to compel the governor to avoid undue delay in the enactment of the subject legislation, which would re-establish stability and avoid irreparable harm to the child patients of the WNY Children's Psychiatric Center.

It also asks the court to compel Governor Cuomo to sign Senate Bill 4630/Assembly Bill 6505 into law, thereby permanently prohibiting the move of the Western New York Children's Psychiatric Center in West Seneca to the Buffalo Psychiatric Center and to establish a continued commitment to the State's most vulnerable.

Since the bill passed unanimously in both houses, even if the governor vetoed it, there are enough votes to override his veto. However, the emotional upheaval of the governor's veto would have serious repercussions for patients and staff.

"Mental health care shouldn't be a political football," said Steven M. Cohen of the law firm of HoganWillig, attorney for the Coalition. "It's a rarity when both the State Senate *and* Assembly unanimously support such an important bill. But they did, so now Governor Cuomo it's your turn to join everyone by signing the bill."

For the last four years, the Children’s Psychiatric Center on East and West Road in West Seneca has been threatened with closing. Governor Cuomo wants to move the facility and its programming to the grounds of the Buffalo Psychiatric Center. The merger will cost taxpayers an estimated \$22 million.

In a recent survey sponsored by Assemblyman Mickey Kearns, all but one of the more than 2,400 constituents who responded said they want Cuomo to sign the bill into law.

“The importance of the WNY Children’s Psychiatric Center facility remaining open in West Seneca has been supported by lawmakers, advocates and the public, said Assemblyman Mickey Kearns (D-West Seneca).

“The WNY Children’s Psychiatric Center is ranked one of the best in the state. This legal action is preventable by Governor Cuomo signing the bill passed unanimously by the NYS Assembly and Senate. After a public hearing and testimony by experts, we know there is no sound evidence to support a case for moving the WNY Children’s Psychiatric Center into the adult Buffalo Psychiatric Center facility. We can’t let politics disrupt the excellent care this facility provides to the most vulnerable in our community, our children,” Kearns concluded.

#####