



# COUNTY OF ERIE

**MARK C. POLONCARZ**

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

March 10, 2014

Richard Lipsitz, President  
WNY Area Labor Federation, AFL-CIO  
2495 Main Street, Suite 440  
Buffalo, New York 14214

**Re: Western New York Children's Psychiatric Center**

Dear Richard,

Thank you for your letter regarding preservation of services at the Western New York Children's Psychiatric Center.

The delivery of clinical treatment services to the children of Erie County is a critical component of our countywide healthcare system. The Erie County Department of Mental Health works diligently with a wide array of providers to ensure that the highest quality and most effective treatment options are available to our children. As I stated in my recent State of the County Address, protecting children, including their health and well-being, is one of my highest priorities as your County Executive.

Recently, the New York State Office of Mental Health (NYSOMH) has conducted assessments of existing mental health services in our region and across the State. At the conclusion of this review process, recommendations were made to the Governor's Office. For the record, Erie County and the Erie County Department of Mental Health had minimal involvement in this State administered, regional facility assessment and determination process. But, at the conclusion of NYSOMH's review, the Western New York Children's Psychiatric Center (WNYCPC) has been recommended to be moved to the Buffalo Psychiatric Center.

As the local oversight entity and manager of state funds, Erie County and the Erie County Department of Mental Health has a responsibility to support only those recommendations that we feel will enhance or, at minimum, remain neutral with respect to delivering the highest quality care to our children. Based on this unwavering commitment, I must respectfully disagree with the findings made by the NYSOMH.

After our own County review, we feel that this change of location may ultimately be detrimental to these children. Thus, we cannot support the decision to transfer these services—and these children—to a facility that we feel, likely, cannot offer the same level of care and attention as the current facility can.

Western New York Children's Psychiatric Center

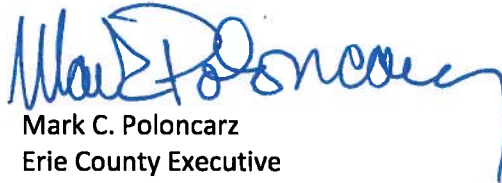
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Erie County & the Erie County Department of Mental Health will continue to focus our attention towards ensuring the best possible outcomes for the children of Erie County in all facets of their development and well-being. This must include trying to preserve children's mental health services at the WNYCPC. We will do all that we can to retain the current arrangement— and will work with the Governor and the NYSOMH to bring about some resolution to this discrepancy and, most importantly, the retention of the WNYCPC as the County's premier mental health provider to children in need of mental health care services.

Thank you again for your thoughtful correspondence regarding this matter. Please feel free to reach me at 858-8500 or at emailmark@erie.gov should you have any further questions or need additional assistance.

Sincerely yours,



Mark C. Poloncarz  
Erie County Executive

MCP/ns