

**Calling On Westchester Medical Center/Health Alliance Of The Hudson Valley To Return Inpatient Mental Health Services To Ulster County And Calling On The County Executive To ~~Begin The Discussion Of The Trajectory Of Mental Health Care In Our County~~ Explore Options To Expand Mental Health Services And Care In Ulster County**

Referred to: The Public Health and Social Services Committee (Chairman Lopez and Legislators Bruno, Criswell, Petit, and Uchitelle)

Legislators Eve Walter and Peter Criswell, and Legislators Archer, Bartels, Bruno, Cahill, Greene, Heppner, Petit, Ronk, and Uchitelle offer the following:

WHEREAS, in 2011, a decision was made by the County Administration to privatize mental health services leading to extensive concern by legislators, mental and behavioral health specialists and others of a lack of coordinated and comprehensive care for this vulnerable population; and

WHEREAS, a New York State Office of Mental Health (NYSOMH) Needs Assessment for the Mid-Hudson Region identified a significant unmet need in behavioral health medication management, with thirty percent (30%) of patients with schizophrenia and forty-seven percent (47%) of patients with depression not adhering to prescribed medication; and

WHEREAS, the NYSOMH Needs Assessment further identified a significant unmet need in follow-up care, finding that over half of those hospitalized for mental illness have no short-term follow-up; and

WHEREAS, additional NYSOMH data indicates that, since 2015, New York State has seen a decline in psychiatric inpatients, compared to a demonstrated increase in those patients in Ulster County during the same time period; and

WHEREAS, in response to a request by Ulster County and New York State that Westchester Medical Center/ Health Alliance of Hudson Valley provide surge space for potential COVID-19 patients at their Mary's Avenue campus, the medical center moved its mental inpatient care to Dutchess County displacing both patients and providers; and

WHEREAS, this COVID-19 surge need has not yet presented itself and subsequent listings of available hospital beds at the Mary's Avenue campus indicate that this move may have been premature; and

Resolution No. 225      June 16, 2020

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WHEREAS, for the reasons listed above the Ulster County Legislature believes that it is clearly necessary and critical that inpatient mental health services are provided within Ulster County for residents who experience significant acute and chronic mental health conditions; and

WHEREAS, the Ulster County Legislature further believes that it is of paramount importance to provide coordinated and comprehensive mental health care to residents, and feels that a County-delivered services model will best achieve this mission; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Legislature calls upon Westchester Medical Center/ Health Alliance of Hudson Valley to make a clear and timely plan to return inpatient mental health services to Ulster County, or inform the County, in writing, of the inability to do so providing fact-based justification; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Legislature calls upon the County Executive, in consultation with ~~the Ulster County Commissioner of Health and Mental Health~~ and private and non-profit mental and behavioral health providers, to **explore options to expand mental health services and care in Ulster County**, ~~begin the process of developing a plan to how best deliver mental health care in our County,~~

and move its adoption.

ADOPTED AS AMENDED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: 23                      NOES: 0

Passed Committee: Public Health and Social Services as amended on June 1, 2020

FINANCIAL IMPACT:  
TO BE DETERMINED

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Legislator Ronk motioned, seconded by Legislator Heppner, to amend the Resolution by striking language in the title and the last RESOLVED clause, and inserting additional language as indicated above in bold font.

MOTION ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES:    23                      NOES:    0

STATE OF NEW YORK

ss:

COUNTY OF ULSTER

I, the undersigned Clerk of the Legislature of the County of Ulster, hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is the original resolution adopted by the Ulster County Legislature on the 16<sup>th</sup> Day of June in the year Two Thousand Twenty, and said resolution shall remain on file in the office of said clerk.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal of the County of Ulster this 18<sup>th</sup> Day of June in the year Two Thousand Twenty.

|s| Victoria A. Fabella  
Victoria A. Fabella, Clerk  
Ulster County Legislature