

# MEMO

TO: Town Board, Shiela Meegan Supervisor, John Rusinski, Councilman

From: Councilman Gene Hart

August 22, 2012

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Kindly approve and support the attached resolution opposing the closing of the Children's Psychiatric Center located in West Seneca, NY

**From the Desk of Gene Hart**  
66 Maplewood Ave.  
West Seneca, NY 14224  
Phone: 716-235-6511  
E Mail: gene7746@ymail.com

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## **Resolution opposing the Closing of the Children's Psychiatric Centers**

### **Located in West Seneca, NY**

**WHEREAS**, the State Office of Mental Health has unveiled a sweeping plan to consolidate and reduce the number of state-run psychiatric hospitals from 24 to 15 over a three year period. Plans include the closing of all children's psychiatric centers and inpatient units including the West Seneca Children's Psychiatric Center and combining these units into "Centers of Excellence" generally designed to serve adult patients with significant mental disorders, not children. Many of these adult patients are individuals designated through the criminal justice system.

**WHEREAS**, institutionalization of children in these "Centers of Excellence" will require the sharing of facilities and services with adult psychiatric patients. Children currently in residence at West Seneca are between the age of 4 years and 18 years of age and are at high risk for future institutionalization without the proper care and treatment. The resulting exposure of these children at risk at the proposed "Centers of Excellence" to adult influence and circumstances beyond their control is both unhealthy and dangerous.

**WHEREAS**; the closure of children's centers, similar to the Children's Psychiatric Centers Located in West Seneca, will result in many children from other areas of the state who will be housed in institutions far away from their homes, in Utica, Buffalo or Albany, thus creating unacceptable hardships for families expecting to stay in contact with their children serviced by these distant "institutions." Accommodations for these children at risk should be made in all regions of the state in order to allow families to stay connected.

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the West Seneca Town Board acknowledges the importance of maintaining an adequate and safe environment for our citizens and especially for children at risk; **and be further**

**RESOLVED**, the West Seneca Town Board opposes the combining of children's psychiatric services in "Centers of Excellence" with adult patients and supports the retention of separate "Centers of Excellence" exclusively for children in comfortable and park like settings similar to those found at the Western New York Children's Psychiatric Center located in West Seneca New York; **and be it further**

**RESOLVED**, that the appropriate Senate and State Legislature Committees convene and seek public comment and input regarding the OMH's sweeping plan; and that the Senate and Assembly consider the creation of separate "Centers of Excellence for Children's Care" at sites located across New York State, including at the Western New York Children's Psychiatric Center located in West Seneca. The West Seneca Town Board authorizes the Supervisor, no later than September 20, 2013, to convey this position, in writing, to State Senator Patrick M. Gallivan, Senator Timothy M. Kennedy, and Assemblyman Michael P. Kearns, and to Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, requesting their attention and assistance in retaining as a "Center of Excellence for Children's Care", the Western New York Children's Psychiatric Center Located in West Seneca New York rather than closing and abandoning another state facility.