

3-10

A RESOLUTION TO BE SUBMITTED BY  
LEGISLATOR FISHER

RECEIVED  
SARATOGA COUNTY LEGISLATURE  
1999 FEB -1 P 4:43

**RE: OPPOSING THE ELIMINATION OF TWENTY ADDITIONAL BEDS  
AT THE BUFFALO PSYCHIATRIC CENTER.**

**WHEREAS**, The New York State Office of Mental Health has announced plans to again reduce the number of psychiatric beds at the Buffalo Psychiatric Center (BPC), this time by an additional twenty beds on April 1, 1999, and

**WHEREAS**, This reduction plan is the latest round in cuts at the BPC, and has serious ramifications for both mental health clients themselves and the community-at-large as well, and

**WHEREAS**, Problems with persistent and chronically mentally ill people, including several recent tragedies resulting from violence on the part of mental health clients following hospital discharge, have highlighted the negative effects of continued unabated de-institutionalization as a public health policy, and

**WHEREAS**, While the number of hospital beds at BPC once numbered approximately 3,000, that number stands at a mere 260 today, with the proposed April reduction bringing the number of psychiatric beds at BPC to 240, and

**WHEREAS**, De-institutionalization as a public health policy was envisioned as a way to enhance the human dignity of the mentally ill, and at the same time save taxpayers money as the cost of operating huge psychiatric institutions was drastically reduced, and

**WHEREAS**, At the same time as taxpayers were to realize significant savings, mental health clients were to receive enhanced services following hospital discharge with a reinvestment in outpatient services, and

**WHEREAS**, This reinvestment in services for mental health clients simply has not occurred, and

**WHEREAS**, Indeed, reports from mental health advocates have pointed to a reinvestment that has not even matched 50% of the savings following de-institutionalization, with the majority of savings going directly into the State of New York general fund, and

**WHEREAS**, Unless there is an adequate re-investment in mental health services for clients who have achieved hospital discharge, then these individuals will not receive the kind of services they need, and

**WHEREAS**, Supportive services such as intensive case management, counseling, employment training, and clubhouse activities were to be enhanced with more and more people living back at home, in supportive housing, and community residences, and

**WHEREAS**, With a lack of financial resources to provide supportive services, many mental health clients are falling through the cracks and creating problems for themselves and others.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT**

**RESOLVED**, That the Erie County Legislature does hereby go on record in opposition to the additional reduction of twenty beds at the Buffalo Psychiatric Center as proposed by the New York State Office of Mental Health, and be it further

**RESOLVED**, That this Honorable Body requests Erie County Mental Health Commissioner Ellen Grant-Bishop to appear at a future meeting of the Legislature's Health/Mental Health Committee to address the ramifications of the proposed additional reduction in beds at the BPC, and be it further

**RESOLVED**, That certified copies of this resolution be forwarded to the entire Western New York delegation to the New York State Legislature, Governor George Pataki, the New York State Office of Mental Health, Buffalo Mayor Anthony Masiello, Members of the Buffalo Common Council, Erie County Mental Health Commissioner Ellen Grant-Bishop, the Erie County Mental Health Community Services Board of Directors, and the Mental Health Association of Erie County.

**JUDITH P. FISHER**  
4<sup>TH</sup> District

FISCAL IMPACT: Positive