

Clark vows to fight alcohol treatment center closing at Creedmoor

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Assemblywoman Barbara Clark does not see the closing of the only Alcohol Treatment Center (ATC) in Queens the same way the governor does.

In fact, she sees the proposed closing as the elimination of "essential services."

Vowing to fight to save the ATC at the Creedmoor Psychiatric Center, Clark, D-Cambria Heights, has begun a letter-writing campaign.

Clark said that Queens cannot afford to lose the center. "If we do, we will be the only borough in the city whose residents will no longer have access to treatment in the county in which they live."

The proposed closing is part of Cuomo's \$15.7 million in budget cuts to the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) designed to direct resources to priority needs and eliminate non-essential, duplicative and discretionary services.

Richard Chady, spokesman for OASAS, said that the Creedmoor facility was slated to close because it is the smallest and most expensive per patient to operate.

Clark said that OASAS research shows the need for more than 500 community residence beds in Queens. "With numbers like these . . . our efforts should not be wasted in saving our only facility, but rather they need to be more appropriately focused on expanding our capacity."

Chady said steps would be taken to offset the closing of the 26-bed facility. Within the next two years two ATCs located in the neighboring boroughs of Brooklyn and the Bronx will be expanded by 81 beds.

OASAS currently operates 13 ATCs across the state, five in New York City alone. OASAS research shows that 1.9 million New Yorkers are affected by alcoholism.

Clark said forcing those families who are living a life with an alcoholic to travel to get help might be the difference between those who "are put on the road to rehabilitation and those who are forced to suffer the consequences of living with an alcoholic."

Chady said that Creedmoor has been gradually reducing admissions. There are currently only 20 patients at the facility.