

Psychiatric center won't open until '72

The state mental health complex going up in the Ocean Breeze section will not open this year as planned because of a legislative cut in the 1971-72 fiscal budget of the state Mental Hygiene Department.

Doors of the South Beach Psychiatric Center, originally slated to open this spring, will remain closed until April 1972, Dr. Alvin M. Mesnikoff, the center's director, announced yesterday.

Construction of the \$30 million 60-acre complex will be completed by the end of the year, according to schedule, but occupancy of the center will be delayed, Mesnikoff asserted.

The cuts, which affect the whole department, were spelled out at a state mental health directors' meeting Wednesday in Syracuse. Mesnikoff attended the meeting.

He said that "somehow

more than a \$1 million cut" originally was allocated to the center's staffing.

In addition, the cut restricted increased staffing of present programs at department headquarters, 51 Stuyvesant Pl., St. George.

Mesnikoff said the center will have to "wait and see" what the State Legislature does next year in funding the center.

The present programs will be maintained at the current level, he said. As a result of the cuts, an out-patient clinic in Brooklyn will be placed under the administration of the South Beach Psychiatric Center.

Mesnikoff considers postponement of the center's opening "regretful" because it prevents the use of this new facility to service the people of this region.

"We will do the best we can in providing out-patient care and continue to fund community-based programs," he said.