

STATE HOSPITALS REDUCING STAFFS

2,839 at Mental Institutions
Let Go by Albany Agency

By JOHN SIBLEY

Dismissal notices were sent last week to 2,839 employes of state mental hospitals and schools for the mentally retarded.

The layoffs, which will take effect during the next three months, are among the economies undertaken by the Department of Mental Hygiene to stay within its budget of \$595.6-million for the state's fiscal year that began April 1. The amount is \$34.3-million below the budget originally recommended by Governor Rockefeller.

In addition to the dismissals, the department plans to eliminate 820 positions through normal attrition.

Other economy measures will include the closing of some institutions and a drastic curtailment of services elsewhere.

Wide Range of Cuts

Those moves, in turn, will require the transfer of more than 3,100 psychiatric patients from state hospitals and 900 ambulatory mentally retarded patients from state schools to other institutions, which officials have described as already overcrowded and understaffed.

Staff dismissals will be wide-ranging, affecting some administrators, psychiatrists, therapists, nurses, orderlies and nonclinical staff members.

At central headquarters in Albany, 66 positions have been abolished, which amounts to 11 per cent of the authorized jobs there. Of these, 50 jobs paid more than \$9,000 a year, and 16—including four assistant commissioners' posts—carried salaries of more than \$20,000.

The current patient population in state mental institutions is 83,000—57,000 in psychiatric hospitals and 26,000 in schools for the mentally retarded.

Transfers Specified

The Gouverneur Division of Willowbrook State School, on Manhattan's Lower East Side, will be closed and its 194 patients moved to the institution's main campus on Staten Island. That will do away with 121 staff positions.

The Sampson State School in Willard will also be closed. Its 670 retarded adult patients will be transferred to similar schools in Newark, Rome, West Seneca and Craig. The jobs eliminated will total 396.

Children's units will be closed at Middletown and Binghamton State Hospitals. Middletown will send its 78 children to Rockland State, eliminating 53 staff positions, and Binghamton will send its 45 children to West Seneca, eliminating 41 staff jobs.

Partial closings are scheduled at four other state hospitals.

Central Islip will lose 350 staff members and will transfer 100 patients as follows: 50 from residents to Brook-

lyn State Hospital, 50 from Brooklyn State Hospital to Brooklyn State Hospital, 200 Queens residents to Creedmoor, and 700 patients to Kings Park State Hospital in Suffolk County.

In addition, 666 patients at Middletown will be transferred to Binghamton, Hudson River, Rockland State and Manhattan State Hospitals. Those moves will permit 439 staff layoffs.

Harlem State Hospital will transfer 400 patients to St. Lawrence, Utica, Marcy and Rockland, and will dismiss 138 staff members.

Gowanda State Hospital, near Buffalo, will transfer 150 to Buffalo State and will dismiss 197 members of its staff.

The department will not open summer camps at Wilton, Liberty and Evans. In past years, those camps have accommodated 3,000 mentally retarded youngsters from state schools and hired 200 college students as counselors.

The department is also closing six research units at

mental hospitals and schools for the retarded, eliminating 100 jobs.

-201?