

Village and Wassaic started before the publicity. The process of getting relief for Newark and Rome started before the hearings."

But he acknowledged that "long-term relief is promoted by a greater public awareness of the problems we face."

The state's mental institutions have 76,000 patients and 51,000 employes to care for them — with half to two-thirds of the employes directly in patient care, he said.

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When the hiring freeze went into effect, "because of the state's fiscal crisis," the department's payroll for the 50 facilities across the state was already short by 8,000 employes.

Five thousand more employes were lost to the hiring freeze, the spokesman said.

After publicity and public pressure increase in January, Rockefeller added \$20 million to the \$580 million cash-ceiling, "hold-the-line" budget request for the department for the upcoming fiscal year that begins April 1.

The departmental spokesman said legislative approval of the \$600-million appropriation next fiscal year would mean that "1,500 of the 5,000 lost through firing and attrition probably will be hired back."

"For adequate care, we would need at least our authorized employe ceiling of 63,000," he added.

The \$5 million Rockefeller made available in January also went to relieve shortages at Rochester, Manhattan and Brooklyn state hospitals.

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