

Editorial Page

Our opinion

# Retarded disclosure

Unbelievable is the only adjective that adequately characterizes the announcement that a 240-bed facility in Concord, built but never licensed as a nursing home, is to become a care center for mentally retarded adults now at Willowbrook State School who are in need of nursing care.

Once again, the bureaucracy — this time the State Department of Mental Hygiene — has steered a course that assiduously avoided consulting anyone else other than the management of the Concord building. Not only wasn't the Island community advised of the plan, but even two organizations primarily concerned with such matters — the Staten Island Mental Retardation Regional Council and the Willowbrook Benevolent Society — were kept totally in the dark about the proposal until last Friday. The state Health Department had already issued a license.

Equally amazing is that by this maneuver the state agency expects the Department of Social Services of our city, which is already in a serious budget crisis, to pick up the bill for this care.

Israel Fogel, administrator of the Concord building, Island View Care Center, said he intends to meet with city mental health officials this week on "final plans," and expects to admit the first residents within two weeks. Definitely a last-minute liaison.

Two years ago, the Advance exposed dreadful conditions under which many of the charges were living at Willowbrook State School. As a result, there have been some changes, but it is still far from the haven for the retarded it should rightfully be.

It's becoming more and more evident that the cause was and is bureaucratic belief in its own sufficiency, despite all the evidence to the contrary with which the bureaucracy has been confronted.

In this case, the average citizen may well ask whether this "pioneer" move was for patient benefit or to rescue a private investment.