

Adviser opposes shift of patients

By WILLIAM HUUS

A Staten Island representative to the state's Mental Retardation Advisory Committee yesterday criticized plans to use a 240-bed facility in Concord as a care center for mentally retarded adults in need of nursing care.

It is expected that many of the center's residents would be transferred from Willowbrook State School.

The proposal was also criticized by a spokesman for the Civil Service Employees Association, a union which represents Willowbrook workers.

The plans, disclosed earlier this week by the Advance, involved the unused facility at 1000 Targee St. to be known as the Island View Care Center.

Originally built as the Danube Nursing Home, it was never licensed for that purpose but has now been licensed by the state to serve as a care center for the retarded.

A "working agreement" has

also been signed by Willowbrook officials and the center's administrator, Israel Fogel, paving the way for the transfer of Willowbrook residents to the facility and the conducting of care programs under specifications agreed to by state school personnel.

Thomas Prisco of Dongan Hills, appointed last year by Gov. Rockefeller to serve on the 11-member state advisory committee and one of two city representatives, said yesterday his group was never informed about the plan.

"We have been pushing for the creation of small centers housing 10 to 12 people as the alternative to Willowbrook-type institutions," Prisco said. "This seems as though it will be just another institution, a chance to make Willowbrook look better statistically."

Prisco said the committee will be meeting Tuesday with Mental Hygiene Department officials in Albany and said he

intends to ask for an explanation of the deal made with the Island View Care Center.

He added that anyone with questions pertaining to the proposal may contact him by writing to his address at 34 Buel Ave., and he will in turn ask those questions at next week's meeting.

The Willowbrook union spokesman, Pat Fraser, contended, meanwhile, that the planned transfer would violate the state's agreement to return residents to their home boroughs when discharging them.

"The residents may get better care at the center," he said, "but it's really just a matter of physical movement."

Fraser said Willowbrook's plans, under mandated changes, were to have included units set up at the school under a geographic breakdown. All residents from Queens would be housed in one section, residents

from Brooklyn in another, and so on.

Each section was to have a regional director, he explained, to administer to the residents from his borough. When a resident was thought ready for discharge, he continued, the administrator was to insure that he be moved to his home borough.

"Moving residents to the Island View Care Center will not be geographic unitization," Fraser charged, since residents from all boroughs would be moved out to a Staten Island facility.

Fraser added that the union's attitude has "nothing to do" with any effect a transfer might have on workers at the state school.

"Our workers could be employed at any type of center established by the state for these residents," he claimed.