

Pushes Mental Outpatient Plan

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Albany, Oct. 31—In a stormy meeting with a state mental-health task force, Dr. Allan Miller, commissioner of the State Department of Mental Hygiene, pledged yesterday that the state would accelerate funding of its controversial program of treating mental patients in private homes, hostels and other community-based facilities instead of mental hospitals.

Responding to attacks by a minority group of the 153-man task force, which charged that he and the department were holding funds to expand community treatment programs, Miller said, "We got more money this year, and we will get more money next year for community services. The fact that the task force has made these recommendations reinforces my own wishes."

However, Miller cautioned that funding of institutions must not be neglected and that a "balance" must be kept between inpatient and community treatment financing.

In defense of the state's program, attacked because of recent incidents involving mental patients—some of whom have been indicted on rape and murder charges, and have had free access to public streets—Miller specified that community treatment would

be made available only for those patients who are not dangerous.

The lengthy afternoon meeting, held at the department offices, here, was convened after 29 members of the Task Force for Development of Community, Residential and Rehabilitative Programs accused Miller of "tying and obfuscation" in replying to their demands for increased funding of community programs.

During the session, several members of the task force's Black and Puerto Rican Caucus accused Miller and his agency of "racism" and of "ignoring the problems of the blacks and Spanish-speaking peoples."

Mrs. Elsie Brown, co-chairperson of the caucus, said, "There are no blacks and Puerto Ricans running the institutions, no blacks working as family-care

takers, nobody doing research into our problems, and in fact, there are hardly any blacks or Puerto Ricans in this room."

At the end of the meeting, the group ask the department to send a resolution to Gov. Wilson requesting that \$25 million in the 1975-1976 budget be allocated to community treatment programs. The request could not be adopted as a task-force resolution for lack of a quorum.

The task force was appointed by Miller in July of 1973 and is made up of 83 lay, or consumer, members, and 70 professionals in the mental health field, many of whom work for state agencies. About 90 people attended today's meeting, during which Miller was scheduled to elaborate on his previous responses to committee recommendations that more money and staff be poured into community treatment programs.