

## Editorial page.

### Our opinion

# The burden must be shared

The revelation that a state psychiatric hospital in Dutchess County — 100 miles north of Staten Island — is planning to return 1,000 of its 1,700 patients to the community, and for most of them the "community" may be domiciliary care beds in so-called "adult homes" on the Island is startling, to say the least.

The protests are already arising at any idea that Staten Island should be the new repository for the state's mental health charges on the grounds that they would receive better and more modern therapy. There is also another angle, of course — the state won't have to pay anywhere nearly as big a share of the cost of patient care if the patients can be shifted to such privately-operated facilities.

The Island already has far more nursing homes than its share, placing a very heavy burden on our general care hospitals, which have a serious bed shortage even without taking into account all the elderly people who are resident in such homes and must get emergency care in our hospitals.

An influx of hundreds of mental patients would also seriously tax our hospitals' facilities, since they too would have to be given emergency medical and surgical care in them.

What mental health facilities we do have would also be inadequate for such an additional load.

Of course, if a patient is a Staten Islander, the community has the obligation to provide a suitable accommodation for him. But to expect the Island to accept hundreds who never had any connection with this borough is more than unjust. It's psychotic.