

Board 2 lashes out at home for adults

By STUART FELD

Community Board 2 took nearly three hours last night to reaffirm its fervent opposition to the influx of state discharged mental patients to Staten Island health-related facilities.

However, it was Klein's Forest Manor Home in Brighton Heights that received the brunt of the attack. After the verbal assault had subsided, a representative of Klein's suggested that he and the board meet privately to discuss the problems.

The board did not exactly jump at the chance.

The meeting had a deceptively calm beginning. Assemblywoman Elizabeth Connelly, Councilman Anthony Gaeta and Assemblyman Louis DeSalvio, the latter two in absentia, declared their support for a moratorium on health-related facilities.

Mrs. Dorothy Fitzpatrick, representing Gaeta and DeSalvio, said: "When you throw a community out of balance, it dies," adding that "the proper solution is not inundating a few communities with geriatrics, mentally ill and incompetents ... every community should be able to take care of its own. The outcry should be tonight — stop it here," she concluded.

A seemingly endless array of community representatives then took the floor to voice their dissent with what they felt was fast becoming an intolerable situation, all citing their community's saturation with health-related facilities.

Dr. Dominick Miraldi, chairman of the health and hospital committee of the board, said that the result of a Health, Education and Welfare Department report he collaborated with was that the Island does not have the proper health facilities to accept the patients, noting that

there are less than 50 Island patients in state facilities.

Next to be denounced was the state Department of Mental Hygiene. Joseph Margolis, executive assistant in the Borough Development Office, said that the Mental Hygiene Department used "progressive sounding measures" to bail out facilities financially, while Dr. Randolph Friedman of the Livingston Community Association called the department a "sham."

Then the spotlight dramatically shifted to the Klein facility, where it was destined to stay for the remainder of the evening. The home has recently become the focus of the community's dissatisfaction with the threatened influx of non-resident mental patients and has brought a discrimination suit against the North Richmond Community Health Center for refusing to provide treatment for non-Island psychiatric patients.

Joseph Carannante of the New Brighton Community Committee said that "it is builders like this who will make Staten Island the largest mental institution the state has ever seen, an institution without bars.

"Klein could not fill his home with senior citizens despite his massive advertising campaign," Carannante continued, "so he went to the state and contracted mental patients. Klein's original promise was to have 75 per cent senior citizens, 25 per cent mental patients. I think that Klein has intentions of filling his place with 100 per cent mental patients."

It was later, however, that the allegations became a little more specific as Mrs. Sandra Werner of the Belair Block Association, a Rosebank-Fort Wadsworth group, claimed that Milton Klein, owner of the

home, owns or controls eight domiciliary care facilities, with a total of 1,708 beds. Mrs. Werner claimed that she obtained the information through the Mental Hygiene Department and the state Department of Social Welfare.

Philip Klein, the home's spokesman, countered by saying: "We are not connected with the Pullmans (the builders of the home). All the Klein family is connected with in Staten Island is one facility, and that is one too many."

The audience in Morris Intermediate School, Brighton Heights, responded with a round of applause.

"When we came, you people were crying out for more beds for the elderly. We were the first ones here, we built before the mental discharges came," he continued.

Jacob D. Klein, his son, added that if the community allowed them to look into areas outside of Staten Island for patients they would be able to use their screening process, which he described as "really a simple affair," and thus have better

patients. He declared that even now there are only 25 senior citizens and 15 mental patients who are non-Island residents in the home.

However, tempers started to flare when Philip Klein refused to give Ernst Bendix, chairman of the West Brighton Community Council, a copy of his statement because Bendix had not asked other speakers for copies.

Bendix, interrupting the next speaker, insisted that Klein's refusal be included into the meetings's record, later adding that he had not asked anybody else because all the other speeches were a matter of "public record."

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