

Island legislators to study

Carey bill for retardation agency

ALBANY — Staten Island's legislative delegation yesterday reacted with moderation to Gov. Carey's veto of a bill to create a separate agency to care for the mentally retarded, despite the fact that all four lawmakers had earlier supported the measure.

The four — State Sen. John J. Marchi and Assembly members Louis DeSalvio, Elizabeth A. Connelly and Guy V. Molinari — also indicated they will study the governor's proposal to set up a new division for the retarded, within the Department of Mental Hygiene.

Marchi, meanwhile, said he will decide sometime next week when to call Dr. Lawrence C. Kolb before the Senate Finance Committee for a hearing on his nomination by Carey to head the mental hygiene agency.

Kolb's confirmation hearing had been delayed on several occasions while committee members awaited the governor's action on the legislation to establish the independent mental retardation agency.

Marchi said yesterday, however, that he will not permit Carey's veto to become an issue at the hearing on Kolb.

"Sen. Conklin has raised some very strong objections about Dr. Kolb's qualifications," Marchi said in reference to Sen. William T. Conklin, R-Brooklyn, who had

sponsored the vetoed legislation in the Senate.

Among Conklin's objections are Kolb's limited administrative experience, his teaching on a part-time basis while employed by the state, and his previous association with the much-criticized Department of Mental Hygiene.

Marchi said those objections will be considered by the Finance Committee, but he noted that the Senate Mental Hygiene and Addiction Control Committee has already questioned Kolb and recommended his confirmation.

The Staten Island Republican added that he will study Carey's proposal to set up a new division of the mental hygiene agency specifically for the retarded, as did the Island's three Assembly members.

DeSalvio, a Democrat who represents part of Manhattan as well as the East Shore of the Island, said he received "hardly any mail at all" from his constituents on the subject of care for the retarded and will remain open to suggestions as to how treatment of such persons can be improved.

Mrs. Connelly, who had strongly supported the split of the Department of Mental Hygiene, said that after reflecting on the bill approved by the Assembly she agreed with the governor's contention that to set up a totally new agency "would be a boondoggle."

She added that she might support Carey's proposal or

some compromise.

Molinari also expressed second thoughts about the split-up proposal, noting: "I don't favor the creation of new agencies because they only add to the bureaucracy."

He said, however, that he believes mental retardation "has not received its just attention" and that the Department of Mental Hygiene should be drastically overhauled before being allowed to continue caring for the retarded.

—PETER HARRIGAN