

## Editorial page

### Our opinion

# She will be our voice

The appointment of Staten Island's Assemblywoman Elizabeth A. Connelly as chairman of a legislative task force to study and advise on reorganization of the state's Department of Mental Hygiene is a good choice.

With all the woes and complaints that have beset Willowbrook Developmental Center here, Islanders have a special interest in assuring far better care and housing for the mentally retarded and the mentally ill. In addition, the fact that people recently released from state mental health facilities are now resident in privately owned domiciliary care homes here in considerable numbers makes for further concern that such care is adequate.

A five-year master plan for reorganizing the Department of Mental Hygiene is being launched by Commissioner Lawrence C. Kolb, and community input should have a considerable role in the decisions.

As Mrs. Connelly said after her appointment was announced by Speaker Stanley Steingut, patients deserve good care and "local residents deserve the right to know the system is working properly for the benefit of patients and the security of the community."

She is sure to lend an ear to the ideas of her neighbors on the Island, but she and the panel she heads will also hold a series of public hearings in various parts of the state, to get reaction to recent policy changes as well as to proposals for the future.

It's a responsible post, and we're sure she'll serve well.