

STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE, Monday, July 14, 1975

Mental health chief sets 5-year improvement plan

ALBANY, N.Y. (UPI) — State Mental Hygiene Commissioner Lawrence C. Kolb says his much-criticized department has drawn up a five-year master plan involving three new offices.

One office will monitor illness and death rates at the department's institutions. An office of internal management will be involved with auditing functions. A social rehabilitation agency will work to enable the release of patients back to the community.

Kolb outlined his plan in a meeting Saturday with the editorial board of the Albany Times-Union.

The Mental Hygiene Department has been the target of considerable criticism centering on alleged poor patient care and inefficient administration.

Kolb told the editors he plans to implement the standards of care set forth in the Willowbrook Development Center consent decree at every development center.

The decree came out of a court battle about conditions at the Staten Island facility. It called for a reduction of Willowbrook's patient population from 2,900 to 250, better education and training, and additional staff.

The commissioner also said the Gouverneur Development Center in Manhattan would be closed, calling it "an old fire trap."