

will be met.

"I could be wrong," he added, but he pointed optimistically to the formation of a Metropolitan Placement Unit, \$6.5 million available for hostel development and a new purchase-of-service contract for community-based care.

"People really don't know what hostels are," said Coughlin, who was responsible for setting up the state's first hostel in 1969 in Watertown, N.Y. There is "tremendous opposition" to placement, he said.

"We have to start breaking down the communities. Each caring for its own. We have a lot of work to do. (Commissioner) Kolb has a great interest in the saturation problem—we don't want the same problem repeated as with mental health facilities."

The department has been severely criticized for its release of over 60,000 patients from state psychiatric hospitals in the past few years, many of whom have ended up in unsupervised, profit-making homes for adults.

The North Shore Coalition, an ad hoc protest committee, has complained about the saturation of the North Shore of Staten Island and has opposed the development of a halfway house for the retarded at 200 Tysen St., New Brighton.

"You hear those same protests all over New York City," Coughlin said. As for meeting the demands of the decree, he said: "We're in pretty good shape."

¶ Staffing: The state, he said, has a "philosophical problem" with education. By April 1, Coughlin said, money will be available to hire another 1,000 staff which will enable the department to meet the decree staff-resident ratios.

"Do we want to hire the 1,000?" Coughlin asks, when the focus of Willowbrook is to place residents in the commu-

nity and the staff will have to be fired when that happens.

At this point, staff is not set up to follow a resident into the community because, Coughlin said, private voluntary agencies are the providers of community care. The money that would have been spent on the resident in the institution will follow him into the community, Coughlin said.

About the present 4,900 Willowbrook staff, he said: "My job will be to help the staff remember what their major concern is—the residents. The business at hand is the care of retarded persons."

Coughlin, who has a retarded daughter, said he hopes that by the time he leaves Willowbrook he will see "smiling kids...in a program."

¶ Education is a real "nitty gritty issue" Coughlin said, stating again the department's position that certain retardates are not "appropriate" for certain education programs. Education is a "broad concept and anything they (the retarded) do is education," he said.

The Willowbrook Review Panel and state officials have had a running argument for over six months about how to define education and to which residents the definition should apply. The dispute is not resolved.

¶ Internal management: Policy manuals covering a wide range of abuses are "fairly good" now, Coughlin said, and there has been a "massive restructuring" of

the facility's bureaucracy, thanks to Piepenbrink.

Coughlin, a former state trooper who has been with the department for less than six months, is unsure of his administrative capability. "I don't know if I'm an administrator," he said.

"I know our main concern here is the retarded. That's what we're here for."

Coughlin is the fourth director at Willowbrook in the past two years.