

STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE, Tuesday, August 10, 1978

Hurricane whips by Island; Trees, power lines toppled

However, he hesitated to issue a formal evacuation notice.

Although hundreds of Islanders, especially those in the Cedar Grove Beach section of New Dorp, heeded the commissioner's warnings, by far the largest evacuation was at the South Beach Psychiatric Center, where the removal of all the patients took place.

At 9 p.m., while the hurricane danger was still high, 252

patients, accompanied by staff members, were loaded aboard seven buses and transported to Willowbrook Developmental Center, where arrangements had been made to keep the patients overnight. Additional 40 cerebral palsy patients were also removed to Willowbrook.

Earlier, the psychiatric center had discharged nearly 100 patients on 72-hour leave.

Dr. Lawrence Sporty, deputy director of the center, said he based his decision to evacuate on the advice of civil defense officials, who predicted flooding of up to a foot or more in the area.

"We have no experience with which to weigh the situation," Sporty explained. "We'd rather do this this time and make a decision from a distance than become completely isolated with no electricity or heat."



Workers get residents of the South Beach Psychiatric Center ready for their trip to Willowbrook Developmental Center as the Ocean Breeze center is evacuated.

S.I. Advance Photo by Tony Carannante