

# State to divide Mental Hygiene Dept. into 3 nearly autonomous agencies

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — A reorganization of the massive Department of Mental Hygiene — currently being planned by the Carey administration — will divide the department into three nearly autonomous agencies.

The move will also reduce the powers of Commissioner Lawrence Kolb, who will retain his title but will have responsibility only for the agency providing services for the mentally ill, sources said Thursday.

Programs for the mentally retarded and developmentally disabled will be consolidated in a second division, and alcohol and drug abuse services will be the focus of the third new office.

The three offices will be given wide operational autonomy but will remain under the nominal control of Kolb.

The reorganization plans were first disclosed Thursday by the Albany Times-Union, and confirmed by sources in the governor's office.

In 1975, Gov. Hugh Carey vetoed legislation that would have split the department into two completely separate agencies, one to deal with the mentally ill and the other to deal with the mentally retarded. He said at the time that he was planning a more limited reorganization.

In the past year, the department has begun shutting down some of its large institutions as part of a move toward more community-based treatment programs for the mentally ill.

The population in state institutions is projected to drop from the current 50,000 to about 27,000 by 1981.

Under the planned reorganization, Thomas Coughlin, the deputy commissioner for mental retardation, will head the new division for the mentally retarded and developmentally disabled.

Commissioner Daniel Klepak, head of the Office of Drug Abuse Services, will head the agency formed by the merger of his office and the alcohol programs in the mental hygiene department.

The spokesman for the governor's office said the final details and timetable for the new organizational arrangement had not yet been worked out.

The Department of Mental Hygiene, with some 63,000 employees, operates more than 60 institutions.