

Catholic hospital to be center for retarded

By SYDNEY FREEDBERG

New York Medical College and its 400-bed Flower and Fifth Ave. Hospital in Manhattan are under the control of the New York Archdiocese.

The takeover gives the New York area its only Catholic-run medical school and virtually assures the demise of Flower Fifth as an acute-care facility.

Members of the college's newly reconstituted board of directors, some of whom apparently were hand-picked by Terence Cardinal Cooke, told the Advance yesterday that the board has approved the concept of turning Flower and Fifth into a rehabilitative hospital for ex-Willowbrook Developmental Center patients.

The transfer of the 160 mentally retarded residents, now living in the Gouverneur Hospital unit of Manhattan Developmental Center, will take place before the summer, state officials pre-

dicted yesterday.

The facility could turn out to be the most expensive and specialized for the retarded in New York State, with health officials estimating the cost of maintaining a resident at about \$85,000 a year. The Health Department, however, has not set a Medicaid reimbursement schedule for the Flower and Fifth as a long-term care hospital.

The composition of the college's 33-member board of directors, which sets policy for the medical school and the hospital, was made public this week, 14 days after the Archdiocese assumed authority over the financially sinking institution.

The board includes about 20 new members, including Pio Paul Goggi, a Todt Hill resident who is also head of the trustee board at St. Vincent's Medical Center in West Brighton, one of 14 Catholic-run hospitals in the New York area.

Other new faces assigned membership include Col. Saul Fromkes, vice chairman of St. John's University after whom Fromkes Hall of St. John's Law School was named; Dr. Frank Cicero, president of Misericordia Hospital in the Bronx and a former state Health Department official credited with drawing up most of the state's Medicaid regulations, and Msgr. James P. Cassidy, director of the hospital division of the Archdiocese's Catholic Charities and the prime mover for the church in negotiations over Flower and Fifth.

Norman E. Alexander, chairman of the board of the Sun Chemical Co. in Manhattan, has retained the chairmanship of the medical college's board of directors.

The church-controlled board, however, faces many obstacles, including a lawsuit brought by the doctors now on staff at Flower and Fifth who are attempting to void the arrangement.

In addition, the board, one member said yesterday, has yet to decide what to do with the hundreds of unionized hospital workers, who apparently stand to lose their jobs if Flower and Fifth is converted into a retardation facility.

Hospital officials in the New York area, including some from municipal facilities as well as not-for-profit institutions, have begun attempting to lay claim to soon to be disbanded services and the patients at Flower and Fifth.

Then there is the complex question of abortion, which is forbidden by the Catholic Church. Board members explained that the issue was raised at the reorganization meeting, and that archdiocese officials informed them that therapeutic abortion techniques would continue to be taught to medical students.

"And they'll probably blink an eye," one board member who asked to remain anonymous said, at the numerous hospi-

itals with which Flower and Fifth has teaching affiliations that allow doctors to perform abortions, as the law requires.

Under the Catholic takeover, the archdiocese has agreed to pump at least \$10 million into the medical college, its research, education and health programs

based in Manhattan and Westchester County.

Flower and Fifth and the medical school, which graduates about 150 doctors a year, were faced with imminent closing had they not received the bailout. According to public reports, the institution was about \$9 million in the red more than a year ago.