

UCP fires 25 workers with poor records

Twenty-five workers employed by the United Cerebral Palsy Association at the Willowbrook Developmental Center were fired this week because of what UCP officials say were poor attendance records.

UCP, a private organization under contract with the state to provide care for 625 Willowbrook residents, had no choice but to fire the workers because they were leaving the agency short of staff, especially immediately prior to and following days off, according to Dr.

Eric Clarke, associate director of the program.

"Some of them have been absent 25 days in less than three months," Clarke said. "It was case of having poor employee morale for those workers who are working so hard and seeing these employees regularly not show up for shifts."

Most of the workers, Clarke said, were therapy aides and had just completed a three-month probationary

period given to all new UCP workers.

One of the terminated employees had complained to the Advance that her due process had been violated by UCP, adding that she had taken her complaint directly to the New York Civil Liberties Union. A union attorney said yesterday that no formal complaint had been received, however.

When UCP assumed responsibility for care of retarded residents of the state institution in September, association of-

officials said they would be in a better position to weed out employees who were not performing up to par than the state, which must follow civil service guidelines to discipline an employee.

"We feel we have a responsibility to the residents and we cannot tolerate employees who do not show up for work," Clarke said.

UCP officials say they are in the process of hiring new workers to replace the terminated employees.

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