

'Dumping' guidelines enacted

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Gov. Hugh Carey has signed into law a bill designed to see that state employees don't get "dumped" along with mental patients as New York reduces the number of people in its large state hospitals, Carey's office announced today.

The bill, which had the strong support of the Civil Service Employees Association, requires the Department of Mental Hygiene to retrain workers at the large state hospitals so that they can take jobs at a growing number of smaller residential facilities or at out-patient clinics.

The state's policy of moving patients out of large hospitals into more home-like settings is officially called "deinstitutionalization." But it has been criticized as "dumping" by the CSEA and by local groups in areas where residents feel that large numbers of patients have been released without proper facilities to care for them.

The CSEA, which represents most of the workers involved, mounted an advertising campaign against the practice, using the slogan, "Dumping — It Hurts Everybody."

But the union's criticisms of the policy have been considerably muted since the bill protecting CSEA job holders won passage in the Legislature.

After Carey recently promised to open 50 new state-operated community residences this year and guarantee the transfer of 1,250 union workers over the next four years, CSEA President William McGowan pronounced the plans "great."

"It's about time they utilized the state workers who have the know-how and the knowledge to help the patients," McGowan said.

In addition to directing the state Department of Mental Hygiene to develop a retraining plan by the end of January, the bill also requires that employees be notified of planned cutbacks at any large institutions, and gives the union a voice in any moves to prevent layoffs.