

Cerebral Palsy area dedicated at developmental center

The level of care and the quality of employees at the buildings administered by the United Cerebral Palsy Association (UCP) at the Staten Island Developmental Center, Willowbrook, were praised yesterday by everyone from state officials to a federal judge.

That praise, however, may become ironic in the next few weeks since state mental hygiene officials have said they intend to ask a federal court to remove some of the control of the cerebral palsy group.

Presently, UCP cares for 400 retarded residents in seven buildings which were formerly run completely by the state's Mental Hygiene Department. Last spring, at the request of parents, a federal judge, John R. Bartels, approved a takeover of the state-run buildings by UCP.

Yesterday marked the official dedication of the UCP complex, with speakers, including Judge Bartels, praising the progress UCP has made. There was no mention of the threat by Mental Retardation Commissioner Thomas A. Coughlin that he will ask Bartels to allow the state to resume total control in three buildings.

Judge Bartels, standing in a brightly painted recreation room, told the 100 persons at the dedication ceremony that UCP had "expanded services" to the retarded at the former Willowbrook Developmental Center. He said the 1,000 UCP workers had brought "love and discipline" to their care.

Most important in UCP's tenure at the center, he said, is that employee absence rates had dropped from 15 percent to 8 percent. On Friday, after hearing a day of testimony, Bartels ordered the state to increase its staffing to court-required levels in other buildings at the 382-acre center.

Bartels threatened contempt of court citations against Gov. Carey, Coughlin and others if the staff levels are not met.

Carey meanwhile, issued a statement yesterday saying he has ordered Coughlin "to hire the additional staff necessary to meet Judge Bartels' concerns."

"We fully expect to satisfy the present requirement for guaranteeing necessary staff-be present at the beginning of each shift," Carey said. The governor, who is running for reelection, added that Bartels' court order had been "misconstrued by some as a criticism of this Administration's amangement of the retarded at that institution.

"Nothing could be further from the truth," he said, blaming the high absenteeism among Willowbrook employees on "the tremendous physical and emotional demands placed on the workers who dedicate their lives to the care of the retarded."

At yesterday's ceremony, Bartels was joined in praising the UCP work by Elin M. Howe, the center's director; Dr. Jennifer Howse, regional retardation director, and state Assemblyman Guy V. Molinar and Assemblywoman Eliza-

beth Connelly.

Although the speakers at the dedication praised the institutional work of UCP, they all pointed to what is their ultimate goal in treatment of the handicapped at the center — placement in a less restrictive setting in the community.

"We must steer a clear and constant path to the community," Dr. Howse said.

The seven buildings dedicated yesterday have been named the Karl D. Warner Complex, after a retired Eastman Kodak Co. executive who has long been active in UCP programs. Warner, who was at the ceremony, won a gold medal in the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.