

# State to delay takeover of 3 UCP buildings at center

By BRUCE ALPERT

The state has agreed to delay until March plans to regain control over three of seven Staten Island Developmental Center buildings operated by the United Cerebral Palsy Association since last year.

The proposal, which is opposed by UCP officials and a parents group at the Willowbrook institution for the mentally retarded, was scheduled to be implemented in November.

The delay was described as "yet another broken promise" from Gov. Carey and mental retardation officials by the union representing state employees at the Staten Island Developmental Center.

"I think they made the promise to get rid of UCP at the three buildings simply so we would support Carey," said Richard Hyper, executive vice president of the center's Civil Service Employees Association chapter. The union supported Carey's GOP challenger Perry Duryea in yesterday's gubernatorial election.

Cora Hoffman, a spokeswoman for Mental Retardation Commissioner Thomas A. Coughlin, denied that politics had anything to do with the state proposal to regain control of the three buildings or its agreement to delay implementation of the proposal until March.

She said that the proposal needs the approval of Brooklyn Federal Court Judge John R. Bartels, who last week requested a review of the three buildings by the Willowbrook Review Panel, a court monitor, before any changes in the seven-building UCP complex are approved.

It was Bartels who approved the creation of the UCP complex in September 1977 despite the objections of the CSEA.

Coughlin has said that the residents of four of the seven buildings at the UCP complex are receiving excellent care from the private organization.

But he said 200 residents in three buildings, staffed by UCP supervisors and state-hired therapy aides — are receiving "inappropriate service" as a result of excessive absenteeism and inadequate leadership.

As a result of those problems, Coughlin said, he submitted a proposal in September to switch the three buildings back to state control.

Hyper of the CSEA said he doubted Coughlin had such a motivation.

"Honestly and truthfully, I don't think the state has any intention of switching the buildings," Hyper said.

"I think you'll find this was just a political promise."

UCP officials and members of the Willowbrook Benevolent Society say they will continue to press for the replacement of state-hired therapy aides with UCP employees.

Robert Schonhorn, the chief administrator of the UCP complex, said that civil service regulations make it difficult to punish employees with excessive absenteeism.

"If we had our own employees, we would fire anybody who was absent too much," he said.

The CSEA maintains that the absenteeism problem is caused by inadequate leadership from UCP supervisors.