

State to assign aides to monitor welfare inn

By ROBERT MIRALDI

Assemblywoman Elizabeth A. Connelly said yesterday the commissioner of the state Office of Mental Health promised her that the state would assign two staffers to monitor conditions at a Princes Bay boarding house she had charged threatens the lives of its residents.

After meeting yesterday with Commissioner James A. Prevost, Mrs. Connelly said she is "hopeful" that the 20 residents of the former Christmas Tree

(A problem compounded — see editorial on Page 8.)

Inn will begin to receive basic services.

Mrs. Connelly had charged that "life-threatening" conditions existed for the residents, many of whom are discharged patients from state and private psychiatric centers. An Advance investigation showed numerous violations of city building and health-code regulations at the facility.

Meanwhile, the city Health Department released documents yesterday indicating that many residents at the boarding house need medical services and that food is inadequate, if available.

Mrs. Connelly said from her Albany office that Prevost said he was asking the South Beach Psychiatric Center to determine if the boarding house at 51 Wilber St. was worth "cleaning up" and if the state should attempt to station a unit there to meet the residents' needs.

Mrs. Connelly said it was not clear yesterday if Prevost would move to halt funding for a \$100,000 liaison unit and put the money instead toward a unit in the Christmas Tree Inn. She said Pre-

vost agreed that services in the boarding house should take precedence over the liaison unit.

The money for the liaison unit comes from a \$4-million appropriation meant for patients discharged from state psychiatric centers into community facilities. "The money was intended for people like those in the Christmas Tree Inn," Mrs. Connelly said yesterday.

The acting director of South Beach,

Martin Kaufman, said yesterday that either unit "would probably improve" conditions at the boarding house. He said South Beach "would like to put a program there," but he emphasized that the liaison unit might be just as effective.

Kaufman also said South Beach "has always discouraged its patients from going" to the inn, but he added that some patients like the facility and

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