

UCP director

hopes to ease union tensions

By BRUCE ALPERT

Theresa A. Rafferty, the new director at United Cerebral Palsy's Karl Werner Center for the retarded, says she understands the concerns of state workers, some of whom are openly hostile to UCP and its administrators.

"I've worked with state workers before, and I understand their concerns about job security," said Miss Rafferty, for eight years deputy regional director for the Massachusetts Department of Mental Hygiene. "And I've been on unemployment once in my life and I know what it is like to worry about your ability to make a living."

Miss Rafferty, 37, was named last week to take over administration of the seven-building UCP complex on the grounds of the Staten Island Developmental Center. She replaces UCP of New York State Executive Director Robert Schonhorne, who will return to directing the group's statewide operations.

State workers had unsuccessfully fought the creation in 1977 of the UCP program at the Willowbrook institution's 600-bed baby complex. Recently union pressure prompted state mental retardation officials to ask court permission to return three shared-staff buildings to state control. Mental Retardation Commissioner Thomas A. Coughlin said state therapy aides have not worked effectively with UCP supervisors in the three buildings.

But Miss Rafferty, who most recently served as an administrator at Greystone Psychiatric Center in New Jersey, said she believes improved communication can ease tensions.

"We should clearly explain what our goals are and give workers input into our programs," Miss Rafferty said. "We all know deinstitutionalization is our goal, and there's no reason why state workers can't be trained to go into the community. We did it in Massachusetts."

Miss Rafferty, who will earn \$33,000 a year in her new post, said she has not had an opportunity to review the Willowbrook program to determine what changes she might propose.

But she indicated that her goal will be to create a program that offers residents as home-like an atmosphere as possible.

"Obviously, we are located in an institutional setting and that limits us somewhat," said Miss Rafferty, who was a nun for 13 years until she left the convent in 1970. "But there's no reason why we can't try to provide, to the greatest extent possible, individualized treatment for each of our residents."

Miss Rafferty's appointment means that the 334-acre institution for the retarded will be administered by two young women. Elin M. Howe, 31, became the first female director at the Staten Island Developmental Center when she was named administrator of the center's state-run buildings in October 1977.

"I'm looking forward to sitting down with everybody down there and becoming acquainted," said Miss Haggerty. "So far, I've met the UCP people and found them, especially Mr. Schonhorne, to be very flexible and open to innovative approaches to our programs. It will be an exciting challenge."

Miss Haggerty, who holds a master's degree in business from Clarke University, should soon learn how large a program she will administer. The Willowbrook Review Panel, a court-appointed monitor, this month is expected to audit both UCP's and state programs at the institution and pass their findings along to U.S. District Court Judge John R. Bartels.

Bartels is scheduled to rule whether the state or UCP should take over complete control over the three shared-staff buildings.