

Former director of Willowbrook

Coughlin takes over corrections post

ALBANY (UPI) — Thomas Coughlin will take over as acting commissioner of the Department of Correctional Services today, replacing Richard Hongisto, who will become a consultant, the governor's office announced yesterday.

Coughlin, who now heads the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, initially was not expected to take control of the corrections agency until after his nomination was confirmed by the Senate.

But Gov. Carey's office said it was decided Coughlin should take over opera-

tions while Hongisto was on hand to offer advice and help smooth the transition.

Coughlin was the director of the Staten Island Developmental Center, Willowbrook, in 1976.

Under an agreement Carey reached with Senate Republicans, Hongisto resigned effective Wednesday. But he will stay on for about a month as a consultant. That also will allow him to take part of the vacation time due him, a Carey spokesman confirmed.

Hongisto became acting commissioner of the prisons agency last summer,

but the Senate Crime and Corrections Committee this spring voted not to confirm him after it was learned he had made a campaign contribution to a committee member.

Carey has hinted he would like Hongisto to remain in state service, and he is considered a likely candidate for heading the state takeover of Rikers Island prison in New York City. Part of the move is expected to take place this fall.

Meanwhile, James Introne, first deputy commissioner of the mental retardation agency, will become acting retardation commissioner Wednesday, replacing Coughlin.

A Carey spokesman said that as soon as Coughlin's nomination was acted upon by the Senate — something hoped for in September — Introne's name would be submitted as mental retardation commissioner.

Coughlin, 42, joined the retardation agency after 10 years as a state trooper in Watertown and seven years as executive director of the Jefferson County Association for Retarded Children.

Introne, 34, a former deputy director of the budget, has served as the governor's assistant secretary for human resources with special responsibilities overseeing state mental health and retardation programs.