

## Cancer danger?

Two months ago, employees at Staten Island Developmental Center's power plant threatened to walk off their jobs unless "a serious asbestos" problem was corrected.

Since then, state Mental Retardation Commissioner James Introne has promised to inspect the facility to determine if the complaints are valid. The workers claim asbestos, which they say lines pipes in the power plant, constitutes a serious health hazard.

"We're hoping to set up the appointment soon," says Felton King, president of the center's Civil Service Employees Association, which represents workers at the Willowbrook institution.

King says he has also received assurances that the seven workers at the plant will be given thorough medical examinations by the state Health Department.

"This is something that we thought was necessary from the beginning," King says. "We're glad we're finally getting a response to the problem."

Asbestos has been linked to lung cancer by doctors, but Staten Island Developmental Center officials say the workers are in no danger because "proper precautions have been taken." The workers are provided with special gloves, masks and goggles to prevent contamination, they say.

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