

# Carey slashes Willowbrook staff in half in his proposed budget

By BRUCE ALPERT  
Advance Staff Writer

ALBANY — Gov. Carey proposed yesterday to slash the work force at the Staten Island Developmental Center by more than 50 percent as the state moves to empty the Willowbrook institution of all but 250 residents before a 1981 court-imposed deadline.

Under the governor's plan, the center's staff, now estimated at 2,800, would be reduced to 1,188 and the institution's budget would drop from \$44.5 million to \$29-million.

State mental retardation officials, reiterating an earlier "no layoff" pledge, said that all the displaced workers would be offered jobs at community facilities for the retarded as well as other developmental centers. But the president of the employee union at the center said the workers would refuse all transfers as long as employees hired by the private United Cerebral Palsy of New York State are employed at the center, formerly known as the Willowbrook State School.

Carey's \$13.8-billion budget proposal also called for \$2.04-million in operating aid for the Staten Island Ferry, an increase of \$340,000 over the current budget year. City officials would not say if the hike would be enough to preserve night-time service and the 25-cent round-trip fare, both of which were said to be in jeopardy last year.

An increase of \$660,000 in state aid is proposed by the governor for the upper division of the College of Staten Island. The increase, which reflects senior college status for the division, would bring the state allocation up to \$5.59-million.

The governor called for modest increases in funding for both the South Beach Psychiatric Center, Ocean Breeze, and the Institute for Basic Research, Willowbrook.

Carey called for a freeze of state revenue-sharing aid, a proposal that would cost the city of New York at least \$50-million in anticipated aid. But aides to

the governor said the city would get the \$200-million in additional aid Mayor Koch says he needs to balance the municipal budget.

Carey, as he urged in the past, called for the elimination of such local items as \$250,000 for the Staten Island Cooperative Continuum of Education, \$200,000 for the Snug Harbor Cultural Center, \$160,000 for community education programs at the Richmondtown Restoration Center and High Rock Natural Center, \$50,000 for the Staten Island Children's Museum, \$40,000 for the Learning Institute at the Jewish Community Center and \$15,000 for the Eden II center for autistic children.

Sen. John J. Marchi, who in past years has been able to obtain funds for these programs in the supplemental budget, usually enacted at the close of the legislative session, said he would fight to obtain continued state funding for the Island programs. "It is a sadly cynical business, the cutting of these items," said Marchi, who chairs the Senate Finance Committee.

State officials said the planned staff reductions at the Staten Island Developmental Center are predicated on the ability of the state to expand its placements of residents into the community. State Mental Retardation Commissioner James Introne has said the state will meet the requirements of the Willowbrook Consent Decree, which calls for the population at the center to be reduced to 250 by 1981.

There are currently 1,600 residents at the institution, 1,100 of whom are under state care and 500 of whom are under the care of United Cerebral Palsy. Introne has announced that all 250 residents slated to remain permanently at the center will be under state care.

Several members of Introne's staff resigned in protest after the plan to speed the placement of Staten Island Developmental Center residents was announced last month. The former staff members, along with members of the Willowbrook Review Panel, a court-appointed panel that monitors care at the institution, said the plan could not be accomplished without jeopardizing the quality of placements into community facilities.

Felton King, president of the Staten Island Developmental Center chapter of

the Civil Service Employees Association, said the union would take "drastic action" if "even one employee is laid off." But he said the union has rejected a state proposal for employees to transfer voluntarily to other state developmental centers and to community facilities for the retarded.

"As long as United Cerebral Palsy has employees at the center, we don't think any state workers should be displaced," King said.

But King said he is convinced the state overestimated its ability to place residents of the Willowbrook institution into the community, adding his prediction that the state would have to reduce its plans for staff reductions. "What they are saying and what they are going to get is something different."

Cora Hoffman, a spokeswoman for the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, said that the state will have a detailed plan available next month showing how the 1,350 residents slated for transfer will be placed.

Ms. Hoffman said that if the state plan falls short of its goal to reduce the institution's population to 250 by April 1981, the end of the 1980-81 budget year, the staffing projections will be revised to ensure that there is adequate staff to meet the requirements of consent decree. The consent decree was signed by Gov. Carey in 1975 and mandates minimum levels of care for former and current developmental center residents.

