

# Plan for resident reduction at center to be evaluated

By ANEMONA HARTOCOLLIS

Court appointed monitors of the Staten Island Developmental Center will meet Saturday to evaluate a state plan designed to persuade them that 1,440 handicapped residents can be phased out of the developmental center by April 1981.

The monitors said yesterday they had not yet analyzed the voluminous placement plan, delivered a week ago on a court-related deadline. But initial, though guarded, impressions from two lawyers crucial to the plan's fate were unfavorable.

Employee-union leadership at the institution also reacted negatively to the

plan, which would cut staff ranks by 2,228.

"I have skimmed through it, and my first inclination is to say it is not adequate," Chris Hansen, an American Civil Liberties Union attorney and advocate of developmental center residents, said yesterday.

"It contains no problems that we haven't known all along, nor any solutions that we haven't known," he added. "There are some very competent and experienced people in state government who can't do what they think they can do."

The plan proposes to transfer residents of the developmental center in

Willowbrook to other institutions and smaller community facilities at a rate at least double past placement levels. It is tied to hundreds of millions of dollars in new expenditures, partly in bonds, in Gov. Carey's proposed 1981 budget. The Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) formulated and would implement it.

Felton King, president of Local 429, the developmental center unit of the Civil Service Employees Association, called the state's provisions for center staff "a suicide plan."

Doubting that mental retardation officials could guarantee new accommodations for either residents or staff within 14 months, he warned: "If one permanent worker is laid off, this local will take one of the biggest job actions New

York state has ever seen."

Temporary jobs are offered in the plan to center employees who volunteer to leave. While sufficient permanent slots are projected, their whereabouts are not specified. The union fears employees would not be allowed to transfer their seniority, an issue the plan does not broach.

"My position is not to volunteer a single transfer as long as UCP stays here," King said. United Cerebral Palsy (UCP), a not-for-profit private agency, operates the 537-resident Karl Warner complex under state contract on the center grounds.

Murray B. Schnepps, an attorney and one of seven federal court-appointed monitors of the center, also questioned the placement plan's feasibility.

"The state has missed every target so far," he said. "This haste idea, I believe, is somebody's concept of how to get rid of the consent judgment and the review panel."

Schnepps, who said he was speaking strictly as an individual, was referring to a 1975 Brooklyn federal court judgment that developmental center residents, then numbering more than 4,000, were entitled to care in community-based group settings. The court-appointed Schnepps and his fellow monitors, formally known as the Willowbrook Review Panel, to assure state compliance.

A Dec. 13 review panel action bound the OMRDD to produce a written placement plan by last Thursday. Also since Dec. 13, the mechanism has been jogged to send the parties back to court should

the panel reject the plan.

"In seeking a coherent and feasible plan we're not necessarily looking for guarantees," Hansen said. "But we're looking to whether the system is sufficiently organized or whether it's a Rube Goldberg system."

"My guess is that this will go to court some way or another within the next six months."