

Developmental Center phase-out plans face budget cuts

By BRUCE ALPERT

ALBANY — State lawmakers are ready to cut proposed aid for a plan to speed the placement of patients out of the Staten Island Developmental Center, Willowbrook, and into community facilities.

Assemblywoman Elizabeth A. Connelly, chairwoman of the Assembly Mental Health Committee, said lawmakers simply do not believe the plan to phase out

the Willowbrook institution by 1981 is realistic.

The news came as lawmakers inched closer to an agreement on a budget before the Monday deadline set by the state Constitution. Major differences remained yesterday between Gov. Carey and Senate Republican leaders over whether the state could afford the GOP's tax-cut proposal.

Sen. John J. Marchi, chairman of the

Senate Finance Committee, said he has already won agreement from Assembly leaders to finance several Staten Island projects slashed from Carey's budget proposal.

The allocations, expected to be added to Carey's \$13.9-billion budget proposal, include \$250,000 for the Staten Island Cooperative Continuum; \$200,000 for the Snug Harbor Cultural Center; \$160,000 for community education projects at the

Island's program, which officials say was threatened by sharp cuts proposed by the governor.

Mrs. Connelly, a Democrat from West Brighton, said at issue in the proposed mental retardation budget is \$48-million earmarked for new community residences to house the retarded.

"It just isn't realistic to think that they could spend the money in the current fiscal year," Mrs. Connelly said, noting that she does not think the state can accomplish its goal of reducing Staten Island Developmental Center's population from 1,700 to 250 by next year.

Mental Retardation Commissioner James E. Introne has said the loss of the funds, which includes a provision to raise revenue by the issuance of state bonds, would doom any chance the state has to comply with a court decree, that mandates the reduced population at the Willowbrook institution. He was unavailable for comment yesterday.

Both Mrs. Connelly and aides to Mar-

chi continued, to deny rumors that the Legislature would initiate major cuts in the state's mental health and mental retardation programs.

"We are not cutting any funds that there is a reasonable expectation they will spend," Mrs. Connelly said.

Aides to Marchi, a Republican-Conservative lawmaker, expressed optimism that other Staten Island programs funded in past years by the state, including the Staten Island Children's Museum, the Learning Institute of the Jewish Community Center and the Eden II institute, would be given appropriations in the supplemental budget.

Michael T. Sheehan, executive director of Snug Harbor said he was "delighted" that Marchi was able to include the cultural center in the regular state budget. But he said the appropriation won't be enough to ease the center's current financial difficulties, which last week forced the layoff of five center employees.

Richmondton Restoration Center and High Rock Conservation Center; \$55,000 to the Staten Island Zoo; \$27,000 to the Staten Island Botanical Gardens, and \$7,500 for the Conference House in Tottenville.

Other items reinstated by lawmakers to the budget proposed by Carey in February include \$10.9-million for school-based drug programs. The action ensures the continued operation of Staten