

Flower Hospital walkout enters second week; early resolution dim

A walkout by physicians and dentists at Flower Hospital in Manhattan entered its second week yesterday with no signs of an early resolution to the conflict.

Hospital spokesmen insisted yesterday that despite the walkout, medical care is being provided for the hospital's 151 retarded patients, most of whom are former residents of the Staten Island Developmental Center, Willowbrook.

Licensed doctors have been hired on a per-diem basis to fill in for the striking doctors, according to John Keane, the hospital's executive director.

The dispute centers on a demand by the striking doctors, members of United Salaried Physicians and Dentists, that they not be required to work in excess of 40 hours a week.

Seven doctors and a dentist are involved in the walkout, Keane said. Michael Mascari, associate commissioner for the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, said he sent staff members into the East Harlem facility last week to check on the well-being of patients. All of the patients have multiple handicaps and require special medical care.

"We evaluated the situation and found adequate coverage was being main-

tained," Mascari said. "We also checked the credentials of the doctors that have been brought in."

The hospital, affiliated with New York Medical College, receives a record annual Medicaid rate — in excess of \$100,000 per patient.

Representatives of the United Salaried Physicians and Dentists were unavailable for comment yesterday. They have maintained that the hospital has refused to negotiate in good faith and that adequate medical care has not been maintained during the walkout.