

## Connelly up for health assignment

Assembly Speaker Stanley Fink is considering Assemblywoman Elizabeth A. Connelly for the chairmanship of the Assembly Health Committee, the Advance has learned.

Mrs. Connelly, a Democrat entering her seventh year in the Assembly, has chaired the Assembly Mental Health Committee since 1977. In that capacity, she has earned high marks from Fink for putting pressure on state mental health and mental retardation officials to improve services.

She has also devoted much of her time to handling complaints from relatives of patients at state institutions.

"Any change would really be a step up in recognition of her achievements on the Mental Health Committee," an aide to Fink said.

Mrs. Connelly said she would like to maintain her mental health post, but would consider another appointment "as long as it would be productive." She said that when the Legislature convenes on Jan. 7 she will become the senior woman lawmaker in terms of length of service — a position she feels should enable her to demand an important committee post.

The Assembly's Health Committee has a larger budget and staff than the Mental Health Committee.

Fink, a Brooklyn Democrat, is reportedly anxious to name Assemblyman William A. Finneran, D-Westchester, to replace Mrs. Connelly as Mental Health Committee chairman. Finneran reportedly ran for re-election only after receiving assurances from Fink that he would be seriously considered for the mental health post.

Lulus — payments in addition to salaries — for committee chairmen go up next year from \$5,000 to \$9,000.