

Willowbrook center feels effect of long impasse in state budget

Advance Albany Bureau

ALBANY — The Easter and Passover holidays apparently failed to have any calming effect on the major combatants in the state's budget impasse.

Both Gov. Carey and Senate Majority Leader Warren M. Anderson refused to budge yesterday on the major bone of contention holding up passage of a new budget, the governor's proposed assumption of local Medicaid costs. The state now appears likely to break the all time record for tardiness in passing a budget, set in 1965 when the Legislature waited until April 27 to adopt a spending plan.

The state fiscal year begins April 1.

The delay in approving a budget is beginning to have a negative effect at the Staten Island Developmental Center, according to members of

the institution's Board of Visitors, a watchdog group.

In a letter to Assemblywoman Elizabeth A. Connelly, the board said that some of the institution's 3,500 employees had difficulty cashing the scrip issued last week in place of regular pay checks. Scrip is an official IOU, in which the state promises to make good on the amount being advanced to workers by banks.

Ella Curry, director of the 940-patient institution, said many center workers live in New Jersey, where banks are refusing to accept scrip. But by yesterday, she said all of the workers had managed to cash the scrip.

In addition, the budget impasse is making it difficult for the institution to purchase needed supplies, Dr. Curry said. The center, she added, is able to burrow surplus supplies

from other state developmental centers to ensure that "there are no serious supply problems."

Dr. Curry said all residents are being fed their normal meals and receiving a regular complement of clothing and other personal items.

"We have no problems now, but I'm glad the Board of Visitors expressed concern that the budget be adopted quickly," Dr. Curry said.

Republican Anderson yesterday trooped out a group of village and small city mayors, all of whom agree that a state assumption of local Medicaid costs should be excluded from the budget. The mayors said they agreed with Anderson that they would benefit more from a lifting of the current freeze on state revenue sharing aid to localities, a move Carey opposes.

Democrat Carey, at a Syracuse

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news conference, said he would not compromise on his proposed Medicaid takeover, which would ultimately lift a billion burden from the city of New York's budget.

"One man is holding our budget and our fiscal future hostage," Carey said, referring to Anderson. "I won't compromise on principle and I am fighting for a principle here."

Meanwhile, Sen. John J. Marchi, R-Ward Hill, repeated his opposition to the proposed Medicaid takeover, despite threats by Mayor Koch to campaign against anyone who does not support the proposal. Democrat Koch backed Marchi in his successful re-election bid last year.

"I will not be pressured into debating the merits of a Medicaid takeover as long as the governor is holding his own budget hostage, with all of the serious difficulties



Senate Majority Leader Warren Anderson makes a point during a session with small city mayors to discuss the budget problem.

Associated Press Laserphoto

for our people that entails," Marchi said.

He predicted that approval of Carey's proposed Medicaid takeover

would "cannibalize existing state services and programs, such as tuition assistance or school aid."

—BRUCE ALPERT