

Board member's firm given award

UCP security contract raises conflict of interest specter

By ANEMONA HARTOCOLLIS

United Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State, a charitable agency serving the mentally retarded, has awarded a \$260,000 subcontract paid for by Medicaid to a business owned by a member of the agency's board of directors, the Advance has learned.

The agency concealed the possible conflict of interest involved in the subcontract when it submitted a required financial report in March to

the state Office for Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

J. Kevin Meneilley, the vice president for finance of the United Cerebral Palsy board of directors, owns and operates a firm based in Jericho, L.I., that was hired by the agency to provide security guards at an institution the agency runs in Willowbrook.

Meneilley's firm, L&M Security Services Inc., has held the subcontract every year since 1978.

"Certainly we will pressure United Cerebral Palsy to terminate that arrangement," Kevin Travis, deputy commissioner of quality assurance in the state Office for Mental Retardation, said after an inquiry by the Advance brought Meneilley's dual role in the security firm and the agency to his attention.

United Cerebral Palsy supplies more than one-quarter of the income reported by L&M Security. But employees of both the agency and the security firm said L&M Se-

curity functions as little more than a bureaucratic front, neither selecting nor training the guards assigned to the agency.

Medicaid, a program of funding derived in equal parts from state and federal taxpayer revenues, reimburses United Cerebral Palsy for the expense of the subcontract.

The security service primarily covers the agency's largest facility, the Karl D. Warner Center in Willowbrook. Located on an isolated woodland tract, the facility houses

and treats 450 mentally retarded children and adults in seven buildings connected by winding passageways.

A private, non-profit agency, United Cerebral Palsy administers a \$31-million budget, consisting almost entirely of government grants authorized by the state Office for Mental Retardation.

During a two-month investigation by the Advance, parents of the mentally retarded, agency employees and internal documents have raised

serious questions about the accountability and fiscal management of United Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State.

United Cerebral Palsy failed to disclose Meneilley's dual responsibilities as a member of the agency's board of directors and the head of L&M Security when it filed an annual Medicaid cost report with the state March 11.

The report required United Cerebral Palsy to declare whether it was