

Shakeup ordered in UCP staffing

By ANEMONA HARTOCOLLIS

Complaining of financial hardship, United Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State has announced plans to reorganize staffing, particularly at its \$26-million institution for the mentally retarded in Willowbrook.

During a series of staff meetings in the past two weeks, officials of the charitable agency have described job changes that some of its 2,300 employees believe will jeopardize the quality of care provided to mentally retarded patients.

Keith Penman, a United Cerebral Palsy administrator, attributed the shakeup to a budget deficit created by the pending federal cutback in Medicaid funding, employees who attended the meetings said.

United Cerebral Palsy spends a \$31-million annual budget to house and treat nearly 1,000 retarded patients statewide, and the agency relies on Medicaid to supply more than 86 percent of that budget.

But state mental retardation officials, who approve United Cerebral Palsy's Medicaid rate, said yesterday it is too early to predict whether the agency will suffer from President Reagan's reduction in Medicaid.

"At this point, we have not been given any direction as to how Medicaid cuts will affect individual programs at UCP or anywhere else for that matter," said David Picker, special assistant on federal relations in the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

United Cerebral Palsy employees complained that the reorganization, scheduled to take effect Sept. 14, appears to favor highly-paid administrators while designed to force out workers who dress, feed and care for the retarded patients.

The plan has stirred furor among low-level employees, who contend they are being pushed to resign, despite an avowed policy of avoiding layoffs, by changes that adversely affect their career, family and social lives.

"If you ask questions, you're labeled a bad person," said a therapy aide at the Karl D. Warner Center, United Cerebral Palsy's 450-bed institution in Willowbrook. "They told us in so

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