

Board that monitors care for retarded gets new head

Theresa A. Rafferty was appointed Friday to head the Consumer Advisory Board, a court-ordered group monitoring the care of more than 4,000 mentally retarded patients who have lived in the Staten Island Developmental Center.

Miss Rafferty, a former administrator of United Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State, will replace Rita Martin, the current advisory board (CAB) coordinator, effective Sept. 8.

"The board had some very good experiences with Terri, and we felt very glad to recruit her," said Mrs. Martin. She is leaving to take a job with the New York County Services Group of the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

As the CAB coordinator, Miss Rafferty will be responsible for guarding against violations of the constitutional rights of re-

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tarded people in institutions and group homes throughout the state.

In addition, the board has been authorized in court to serve as the surrogate parent of about 750 retarded patients whose natural parents are dead, ailing or estranged.

CAB members were familiar with Miss Rafferty from her two-year tenure as director of the Karl D. Warner Center, an institution for the retarded operated by United Cerebral Palsy in Willowbrook.

Mrs. Martin said that the CAB did not believe it had created a conflict of interest by hiring Miss Rafferty, who resigned her position with United Cerebral Palsy last February.

The CAB monitors the care of the Warner Center's 150 patients, whom United Cerebral Palsy, a charitable agency, inherited from the state-run Staten Island Developmental Center.

"We haven't found there to be any immediate conflict," Mrs. Martin said. "The issues we monitor are very clearly spelled out by the court, and it actually doesn't matter who does the monitoring. Our only concern is to correct those deficiencies."

Miss Rafferty, saying she was "delighted" by her appointment, also said she trusted she could perform her job impartially.

"I feel the agency I left will respect my responsibilities," she said. "I'm going to stick with the issues and not with personalities."

Miss Rafferty, who is 40 years old, will head a staff of five professionals with clinical backgrounds, seven board members including parents of the mentally retarded, and clerical employees.

The CAB coordinator reports to the federal court and wields considerable authority, but the position, which is funded by the state, carries a salary of \$26,600.

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For thirteen years, Miss Rafferty was a member of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. As a nun, she served as an administrator and teacher in parochial schools.

In 1973, she went to work as a planner for the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation. She worked as a budget analyst and coordinator of mental health programs for the state of New Jersey before becoming an administrator with United Cerebral Palsy in 1979.

The Consumer Advisory Board was established in Brooklyn Federal Court in 1975, as part of the Willowbrook Consent Decree.

The consent decree was the result of years of litigation by parents of the mentally retarded against the state. It set guidelines to reform the squalid and overcrowded Willowbrook State School, since renamed the Staten Island Developmental Center, and it has shaped policy throughout the state.