

UCP residences on Staten Island face state takeover

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ALBANY — Citing major operating losses, United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) Associations of New York State has decided to turn over operation of five Staten Island community residences for the retarded to the state.

Robert Schonhorn, UCP's executive director, said the five residences, all two- and three-bedroom apartments, would be turned over to the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities on May 1. A sixth apartment, located in Brooklyn, will also be switched over to state control.

The apartments are among 29 operated by UCP under its Post Institutional Placement Program (PIP). The private agency agreed to continue operating its 23 remaining apartments at least until October, state officials said yesterday.

Schonhorn told the Advance that UCP had decided to turn over operation of the five Island apartments, three of which are located in Meiers Corners, one in Mariners Harbor and another in Eltingville, because "we couldn't absorb the losses anymore."

He said the agency is allocated about \$60 a day per resident, but actual costs amount to \$72.

Schonhorn said the 30 to 40 UCP employees at the six apartments will be offered jobs at other UCP facilities. "There will be no layoffs," he said.

Thomas Shirtz, a deputy commissioner for the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, said the state would probably spend about as much as UCP did to run the apartments, which house high-functioning retarded residents.

But he said the transfer to state control means the state can provide employment for workers at the Staten Island Developmental Center, Willowbrook, some of whom are threatened with layoffs as the state moves to empty the institution under terms of a court decree.

At one point, there were reports that UCP would stop running all 29 apartments on April 1.

But Shirtz said that he and Schonhorn reached agreement yesterday for the private agency to continue operating 23 of the apartments at least through October 1.