

State pays late vouchers

Staten Island foster care providers serving mentally retarded clients have been paid their regular monthly payments after living 2½ months without income from the state.

Processing of vouchers, submitted by the Staten Island Developmental Center for home-care providers or non-staff providers at the center, were delayed more than two months because of snags in the implementation of the state's new accounting system. The only vouchers still outstanding for individual service providers through the center are expense vouchers, said business office director Atanas Kobryn. "Most if not all our family-care providers have been paid," he said.

Mildred Nitto, home-care provider for five retarded elderly clients, said she received two checks totaling \$1,876 and covering an accumulated debt from the state for five months. She will now be able to pay off debts she incurred to help make ends meet during that time, she said.

Foster grandparents and senior companions, low-income senior citizen volunteers who receive \$40 for a 20-hour week, were paid six weeks' back pay last week, according to the foster grandparent program director at the center, Nettie Evans. Program expense vouchers are still outstanding, as are vouchers that were held at the center's business office and sent only recently to accommodate the flooded system.

"I'm just hoping we won't have to wait another six weeks for checks," Ms. Evans said.

SHEILA CHASE