

# State to pick up SIDC employees, director asserts

By BRUCE ALPERT

Most workers laid off from the Staten Island Developmental Center will be offered jobs at other state facilities, the center's director said yesterday.

About 250 of the Willowbrook center's 2,400 employees recently received notices that they might be fired, demoted or transferred to other mental health facilities because of reductions in the center's patient census.

But Dr. Ella Curry, the center's director, said about half of the employees could fill jobs created by the expected state takeover of two center buildings now operated by United Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State (UCP).

Negotiations to take over the two buildings, operated by the private agency since 1977, are "proceeding positively," Dr. Curry said. Center officials said the takeover could be accomplished by October 1, the date the 250 employees are scheduled to be taken off the institution's payroll.

Most of those not offered jobs at the two UCP buildings would

be offered jobs at other state mental retardation and psychiatric centers in New York City, Dr. Curry said. But they would not necessarily retain seniority or job titles and might face a pay reduction, state officials said.

Dr. Curry said a hiring freeze was put into place at other centers to give Willowbrook employees "first crack" at new jobs.

In addition, she said, that the Island employees generally have enough seniority to "bump" employees now working at other state institutions. Under civil service law, she said, these employees would be entitled to take the place, or "bump," less experienced state workers elsewhere.

"I can't say there won't be any layoffs," Dr. Curry said. "But for most employees who are willing to work somewhere else, there shouldn't be any problem."

Some center employees have complained, however, that it would be tough for them to commute to other state facilities. This is especially true for those who do not drive and live either on the Island or in New Jersey.