

Study lauds voluntary care for the retarded

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Voluntary agencies that house the mentally retarded provide better care for much less money than comparable state-run agencies in New York City, a state commission has concluded.

In a report scheduled for release today, the Commission on the Quality of Care for the Mentally Retarded said the median cost per resident at voluntary agencies was \$27,876 annually, compared to \$43,093 per resident at homes operated by the state.

The commission also found that while state residences in the city had more personnel and housed more residents, homes run by voluntary agencies provided more services for the dollar.

Salaries of state workers, which are roughly \$2,000 more per year than the

salaries of workers in voluntary agencies, were cited as a factor.

Commission Chairman Clarence Sundram said the state faced a tough transition when it was forced by a federal court to move away from caring for the retarded in institutions, as it had done for 100 years.

The commission also recommended that the housing of patients in apartments be discontinued. The report concluded that apartments which house two or three retarded persons cost as much as the institutions did and provide less care than state-owned homes which house as many as 15 residents.

The move from institutions to community residences, the report added, has been successful in cutting costs and providing a better atmosphere for the retarded.