

State officials said they approved the plan to reassume control of the buildings because it enabled them to reduce the number of layoffs resulting from the Willowbrook center's continued loss of patients. Patients are being transferred under a 1975 court decree that mandates that center patients be placed in smaller community-based facilities.

Dr. Curry said the state takeover of buildings 12 and 13 would generate about 89 new jobs, mostly for professionals and support staff.

She said without these jobs the state would have been forced to dismiss more than the 70 employees given layoff notices effective today.

Keith Penman, director of the Karl Warner Center, said all of the UCP employees displaced by the takeover would be given other jobs by the agency. "No one will lose a job at UCP," he said.

Penman said he believes that patients who received care by the private agency made significant progress.

"I believe that over the last five years, the clients received more therapy than they had in the past and were provided with a more coordinated system that enabled them to make more progress," Penman said. He said his only disappointment was that UCP failed to transfer more of the patients into community residences, where, he said, they can better reach their learning potential.

— BRUCE ALPERT