

# Psychiatric center, UCP hit by cuts

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ALBANY — United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) Associations of New York State has sent layoff notices to 139 of its 2,500 city employees — including about 45 on Staten Island.

Meanwhile, officials at South Beach Psychiatric Center have been ordered to trim its 1,000-person payroll by about 70 positions shortly after April 1. The reduction will come through a combination of layoffs and attrition, state Office of Mental Health officials said.

The staff reductions are among the first visible effects of Gov. Mario M. Cuomo's plan to close a \$1.8-billion deficit through reductions in state payrolls and local assistance programs.

Under the governor's proposed \$31.5-billion budget (\$18.5 billion represents state taxpayer revenues), the state 170,000 work force is scheduled to cut by 14,000 employees — more than 8,000 through layoffs.

Robert Schonhorn, UCP's executive director, said the agency had to resort to layoffs because the state has assigned the agency an "interim" Medicaid rate which he says only provides 80 percent of the funding it needs to maintain current services.

UCP receives different Medicaid rates for each of its programs. Its rate at the Karl Warner Center, located on the grounds of the Staten Island Developmental Center, for example, is \$150 a day per patient.

Schonhorn said the reductions might force the agency to fall below staffing levels mandated by a 1975 court decree that covers most of the private group's patients. "We should know by the end of the week whether this will happen," Schonhorn said.

But, he said, the layoffs, which are effective March 5, "surely will cause a tremendous amount of hardships" for the affected employees and the handicapped youngsters they serve. Schonhorn said, however, that more than half of the reductions will occur in supervisory and administrative staff and only 22 percent in direct-care workers to minimize the effect on patients.

Keith Penman, UCP's Staten Island regional director, said the agency will lose 26 of about 1,000 jobs at the Karl Warner Center; 14 of 140 workers at the 50-bed Nina Eaton Center, Ocean Breeze; three of 65 posts at its day program center in Mariners Harbor and two of 45 jobs at its five community-based apartments.

Robert Norris, deputy commissioner for the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, said UCP is being forced to undergo the same kind of cutbacks as state developmental centers. The state agency is slated to lose more than 2,000 employees

Although Cuomo's budget calls on the Staten Island Developmental Center to lose another 333 positions after April 1, Norris said the final figure still is being worked out by agency budget officials.

Ira Kleiman, spokesman for South Beach Psychiatric Center, said that the center has not yet decided what programs will be cut as a result of the staff reductions.

Kleiman said the agency will place a priority, however, on maintaining its 396-bed in-patient facility. That means, center officials say, a reduction in out-patient programs, which serve about 5,000 people a year in Brooklyn and the South Shore of Staten Island.

"Most of the decisions are still being made," Kleiman said. "It certainly is a difficult task and our administrators are working to ensure that services are kept at the highest level possible despite the cutbacks."

Originally, it looked like the job loss would force the closing of the center's South Shore out-patient facility at 376 Seguire Ave., Princes Bay. But Kleiman said yesterday that the center hopes to keep the center open, although at a substantially reduced schedule. It is now open five days a week.

Meanwhile, Staten Island Family Court Judge Holt Meyer called on the center to place a top priority on maintaining its Family Court clinic. Last year, he said the clinic served 300 families.

"It represents a major safety net to serve the most vulnerable and troubled families which the court sees," Meyer said.