

# Search committee named to help fill commissioner posts

Advance Albany Bureau

ALBANY — The Cuomo administration has appointed a search committee to help with the selection of commissioners for the state offices of mental health and mental retardation and a director for the Division of Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse.

Cuomo aides would not say last night what the naming of a search committee means for Assemblywoman Elizabeth A. Connelly, D-West Brighton, who had been hoping for the state alcoholism post.

"It doesn't necessarily mean that she has the job or that she doesn't," one Cuomo aide said.

Heading the search committee is James Introne, a former state mental retardation commissioner who was director of state operations for former Gov. Hugh L. Carey.

Introne said he hopes to present a list of recommendations for the three positions by the middle of April.

Some Cuomo sources said the administration had trouble filling the mental retardation and mental health positions because of

the layoffs proposed in the governor's budget.

But of the more than 4,000 layoffs planned for the two agencies, about two-thirds are expected to be averted as a result of restorations added by legislative leaders.

"Many people didn't want to come in faced with all those layoffs and no decision as to how they were implemented," said one Cuomo administration source. "Now that many of the layoffs have been averted it could be a lot easier to find qualified candidates."

The current mental retardation commissioner is Zygmund L. Zlezak, a Carey administration holdover. Mental health is being run by William Morris, who was appointed acting commissioner after former commissioner James Prevost resigned last December.

Robert A. Ross is the acting director at the Division of Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse. He succeeded Sheila Blume, who also resigned.