

1,069 in March 1982.

In addition to possible additional cuts in out-patient services, Kleiman said the staff cuts will make it more difficult for the center to maintain its physical plant and manage its quality assurance program.

Robert Spoor, spokesman for the state Office of Mental Health, said a combination of layoffs, the hiring freeze and early retirements are causing job shortages throughout the state mental health system.

"We've been in discussions with the Office of the Budget and the governor's office to try and develop a plan to fill vital positions, particularly in direct patient-care services," Spoor said.

Peter Lynch, a deputy budget director, said the state is prepared to "selectively" lift the freeze to fill needed direct care positions at state psychiatric facilities.

Meanwhile, other mental health and mental retardation officials say they hope to persuade the governor's office to cancel some of the planned layoffs scheduled to begin Friday.

Carol Schlageter-Chady, spokeswoman for the Office of Employee Relations, said the state has already moved to reduce the layoffs planned for next Wednesday and Friday at state mental health, mental retardation and alcoholism service programs from 1,300 to 654.

Part of the reduction can be attributed, she said, to the early retirements.

The state estimates that more than 7,000 workers will take advantage of a plan that offers increased pension benefits for those who retire early.

Cuomo offered the plan last February as a way to avert some employee layoffs.

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