OFFICE OF MENTAL RETARDATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

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Drug arrests at retardation facility

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Authorities concluded an 18-month investigation into drug dealing at a Staten Island center for the mentally retarded Thursday, arresting 10 of 14 employees accused of using the facility as a base to sell cocaine and heroin.

Police, who were still looking for four other workers named in warrants, said those charged apparently sold no drugs to patients at the Staten Island Developmental Center at Willowbrook, although transactions took place during work hours.

Seven employees were called away

from their posts and arrested, and the rest were taken into custody at their homes, police said.

Dr. Ella Curry, center director, said each was "directly involved with patient care" and averaged 10 years at Willowbrook.

She said there were no indications that any patient was harmed.

Although some drugs were sold to outsiders who came to Willowbrook to purchase them, most of the dealing appeared to have involved "workers selling to fellow workers," according to William Murphy, the Richmond County district attorney.

