

Islander appointed SIDC acting director

James Walsh of Princes Bay, who had been deputy director of the Staten Island Developmental Center, has been named acting director of the institution effective today. He replaces Ella A. Curry, who has been named director of the Westchester Developmental Center.

Mrs. Curry was reassigned so that she can be closer to her family and home in New Rochelle, a spokesman for the state Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities said.

"She's done a super job at Staten Island," the spokesman said. "She's earned the chance to be closer to home."

He added that Mrs. Curry's reassignment has no bearing on reports that she is being considered for the top job in the state agency.

Her name was reportedly among three submitted to Gov. Mario M. Cuomo for the cabinet-level position by a special panel headed by the agency's former

commissioner, James N. Introne.

While Walsh's official title is acting director until a director is named, the spokesman said "it's a vote of confidence" that he was selected to take over.

Walsh, 35, has been with the state mental retardation system since 1967 and has been an employee at Staten Island Developmental Center since 1969.

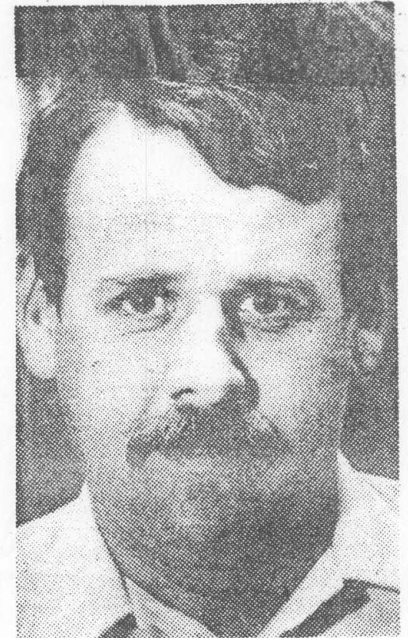
Very much a success story, Walsh started at the Island institution as an assistant recreation therapist and moved through the ranks as a recreation therapist, senior recreation therapist, treatment team leader, project director and deputy director for administration.

Walsh said his top priority will be to continue to oversee to the depopulation of the institution, mandated by a federal court to be completed by April 1985.

"I hope to bring additional stability to the facility as it goes through the remaining years of the transition under the federal court mandate," Walsh said.

In the wake of arrests of 10 employees May 27 who are accused of selling drugs on the grounds of the institution, Walsh said he is eager to work with union leaders and his deputies "to increase the staff's morale."

He received a bachelor's degree from Marist College, Poughkeepsie, N.Y., and a master's in health care administration from



James Walsh

Jersey City State College.

He and his wife, Margie, have three children, Maryann, 5; Laura Kelly, 1, and Susan, 5 months.

— A. STANLEY ALLISON