

homes to meet the current demand. But that is easier said than done.

"We have clients that are ready to be placed, but we don't have enough community sites," said James Walsh, acting director of the Staten Island Developmental Center. "The site selection process is complicated; you have to go through a lot of red tape and community opposition."

The state is further handicapped by New York City's housing shortage and the lack of homes suitable for use by multihandicapped clients.

The state has allocated \$12.6 million for capital expenses to establish new group homes this year. "We certainly plan to have a more ambitious development program in New York City in the next two years compared to the past couple years," said Betsy Crowell, acting associate commissioner of the state's New York City County Service Group. But, she added, "That is tied specifically to the Willowbrook run-down."

Moreover, a budget of \$12.6 million for the entire state is not all that generous considering that a new home opened this summer in Oakwood cost almost \$500,000,

said Keith Penman of United Cerebral Palsy of New York State.

The number of beds allocated for community clients isn't the only gripe. Advocates of community clients also complain that state-operated residences are planned around the needs of patients in institutions rather than those in the community.

Both Ms. Ames and Levy said that the current trend in community residences is toward facilities for the multihandicapped and more severely retarded patients, because those are the people mostly likely to be institutionalized. "That means almost 100 percent of the new residences are for less than 10 percent of the mentally retarded population," said Levy.

"There are no matches in the community for the clients left in Willowbrook," added Cora Hoffman of United Cerebral Palsy of New York State. "The ones left in the institution are very, very low-functioning or multi-handicapped."

But the state officials say they have few options but to emphasize placement of Willowbrook patients.

"We wouldn't have the complaints if we structured the residences around the needs of the

community clients, but it's not realistic at this point," said John Lamendella, administrator of the Borough Developmental Services Office. "We have the consent decree and we have to deal with that. The OMRDD is under some difficult time constraints."

But even if this was not a mandated matter, Walsh argued that the state has the correct priorities.

"We have limited resources, and we have to look at how we can best use those resources," he said. "If I have one bed and two clients, one that's profoundly retarded and multihandicapped and another that is mildly retarded, which am I going to serve, especially when I can maintain the second person at home with support services?"

Despite the problems, said Walsh and Lamendella, advocates of community clients should not lose hope that their needs will remain unfulfilled. The administrators provide assurances that the establishment of group homes will continue even after the institutions have been emptied.

"It's an ongoing process," said Lamendella. "There's a need for patience."

— JULIE MACK

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