

SIDC relocations slower than planned

By WENDY GREENFIELD

Relocating residents of the Staten Island Developmental Center into group homes and other state-run centers has not been as successful as planned over the last six months, a spokesman for the facility said.

Because of this, staff layoffs have been averted at this time, although workers in developmental centers in Rockland County

and Syracuse now are being laid off.

James Walsh, the facility's deputy director, said administrators hoped to transfer 150 patients out of the Willowbrook facility over the last six months, but only placed 60 in group homes or in other centers across the state.

The Willowbrook center for the retarded, which housed over 5,000 residents in 1972,

now has only 750 people under state care. There are 1,685 workers, or two workers for every patient.

Administrators hope to reduce the patient census to 531 by March 31 and at the same time eliminate 200 to 300 workers, Walsh said.

The center lost about 200 workers last year through layoffs and transfers to other state facilities. Since May, 159 more workers left through an early retirement program.

Under Gov. Mario M. Cuomo's proposed 1983-84 budget, the center is slated to lose 333 full-time positions by March 31.

Walsh said part of the difficulty in transferring patients out of the facility is that they have no place to go.

"We still have a few hundred clients that could go if we had the sites available," he said.

Sept. 27, he met with developmental center administrators from other boroughs to discuss possible sites for residents.

Walsh said three group homes are slated to open within the next three months on Staten Island. One in Eggertville is to open later this month and will house nine people; another in Meiers Corners would open in November and house 10 residents and a third in Tottenville would open in December and also house 10.

Group home residents would receive 24-hour care and supervision, he said.