

# Development Center officials, police press investigation of rape

By RON DesJARLAIS

A severely retarded quadriplegic woman living at the Staten Island Development Center (SIDC) was seven months pregnant when officials learned she had been raped, SIDC Director James Walsh said yesterday.

Officials had initially believed her to be eight months pregnant. SIDC officials reported her condition to police two weeks ago.

The 31-year-old woman, whose name is being withheld, is unable to speak and is neither physically nor mentally able to consent to sexual relations, officials have said.

Staten Island police and SIDC investigators are now trying to determine how she was raped and why it took so long to discover the pregnancy.

Both Walsh and police are keeping confidential whatever progress is being made in the investigation. Walsh said he expects the internal investigation results to be announced within two weeks.

When asked whether he was concerned about the time it took to discover the pregnancy, Walsh said, "That was one of the first questions that I had asked."

He said the victim had not gained any weight and did not have a distended stomach. Her menstrual cycle has been irregular all along, he said, and there were other medical problems that would have made her pregnancy less apparent.

Walsh said the woman was living in a cubicle in Building 25 with seven other clients at the time the rape allegedly took place.

He said the ward was moni-

tored around the clock, and that there were always other residents in her cubicle.

"She was never by herself," Walsh said. He declined to comment on whether other residents in her cubicle were able to speak.

Sixty-four non-ambulatory residents live at Building 25, which is co-ed, he said. Federal regulations mandate that the wards be subdivided into cubicles, he said.

Walsh said the woman's mother met with SIDC medical staff last week. Walsh said he also met with the woman's brother and sister-in-law.

He said doctors were in court yesterday getting approval for treatment and that they have asked family members to support them.

The state, however, is the woman's legal guardian, Walsh said. If relatives disagree with the medical staff's handling of her pregnancy, he said, they would have to go to court to have it changed.

The woman is expected to give birth sometime in February. Walsh said doctors do not expect any complications.

"As of right now, the fetus appears to be healthy and normal," Walsh said.