

# Metro

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## Staten Island

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# End of line for Willowbrook

By MARY ENGELS

Plans for phasing out the Staten Island Developmental Center (formerly Willowbrook) will be unveiled within two weeks for approval by Gov. Cuomo and the State Legislature, according to Arthur Webb, the commissioner of the New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

Webb revealed the move at a recent reception to introduce two newly appointed commissioners. It was held at The Institute for Basic Research in Mental Retardation on Forest Hill Road, adjacent to the Center.

Before the reception, the director of the Institute for Basic Research, Dr. Henry Wisniewski, conducted tours of the facility and officially welcomed the several state and voluntary agency officials who accompanied the commissioner.

**WEBB SAID HE** was very "impressed with the place. I only wish there were more like it. It's the only one of its kind in the state."

The commissioners are **Hollis Shew**, the new deputy commissioner for Pro-

gram Operations, and Elin Howe, an associate commissioner of the New York City, County Service Group.

Webb said, "We will close Willowbrook as we know it today. We have reached agreement with United Cerebral Palsy and their units which are now under the state's jurisdiction. They bring the population of the Staten Island Developmental Center to slightly under 1,000 clients to be placed in varied settings."

Webb indicated that there will be "brand new specially built units that will be constructed adjoining the Institute for Basic Research property."

There will be three, 24-bed units designed specifically with a home background and no institutional flavor, Webb noted.

**HOWE**, A director of the Staten Island Developmental Center from 1977 through 1980, said she was "pleased to come back," and is looking forward to taking part in the "Willowbrook run-down."

She said, "It will be a combination of phasing out the Staten Island Developmental Center."

Though the center is next to the Institute for Basic Research, each will



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**Henry Wisniewski (l.) and Arthur Webb discuss plans for phasing out Staten Island Developmental Center.**

be a separate entity. The director of the Staten Island Developmental Center, James Walsh, will head those buildings.

Webb noted that when he became commissioner last September, "I found a number of issues facing me, but the most important was what is the future of Willowbrook. By law we are

mandated to be down to 250 clients by April of 1985."

What eventually will become of the Willowbrook property will be up to the Office of General Services.

"I'm almost certain a task force will be set up by the Governor to seek community input... and comment," Webb said.