

# Hit Developmental Center

## State auditors report 'serious deficiencies'

By ADAM NAGOURNEY

Albany (News Bureau)—State auditors uncovered "serious deficiencies" in the operation of the Staten Island Developmental Center, including uncontrolled drug supplies, employees sleeping on the job, and poor purchasing practices, according to an audit published yesterday by Controllor Edward Regan.

A report accompanying the audit contained several recommendations to improve conditions at the center, formerly known as the Willowbrook State School, which is operated by the State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. During surprise late-night inspections, the auditors found therapy workers sleeping in make-shift beds in darkened dormitories.

Regan said the auditors were prevented from making some surprise checks because outside door locks were jammed shut with "bitt" keys. He noted

that the keys created "serious safety problems."

In one instance, a naked patient was observed wandering unattended in a ward where two attendants were behind bedroom partitions.

Among the improper purchasing practices uncovered was the division of large orders into several smaller orders to avoid competitive-bidding requirements, Regan said.

The auditors also reported finding lax inventory control over prescription drugs and syringes. They said hospital administrators were improperly dumping contaminated and partial doses of controlled drugs into a large chest, rather than disposing of them under procedures set out by law.

The audit, conducted between April 1981 and October 1982, also turned up repeated instances of employees leaving work early—often without signing out—and coming in late.

The auditors said they found thousands of dollars

worth of new refrigerators, box springs, and mattresses rotting away in storage.

The controller's report said that state officials admitted there were problems and agreed with Regan's assessments. They said they had responded to many of the problems cited by the audit by instituting regular surprise spot inspections and by disciplining workers named by Regan.

"When we find a problem like this, we make an immediate effort to deal with it," said Commissioner Arthur Webb of the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

The facility is in the process of phasing down its activities as a result of a 1975 court consent judgment. It currently has 800 residents and 2,100 staff employees, down from 1,400 residents and 3,600 employees four years ago.

Under the consent agreement, the resident population must be reduced to 250 by March, 1985.