

Health Department, said. "But the problem is generally one found throughout the industry, and Staten Island is on par in this area with all the other developmental centers in the city."

Wolf said that state institutions have difficulty recruiting physical therapists because they cannot not offer competitive salaries.

Another problem cited by the state was deficiencies in the institution's physical plant. The SIDC buildings, constructed in the 1930s, do not meet many code requirements, including those for toilet stalls, viewing windows from nurses' stations, number of exits, door sizes and unlocked windows.

"As the requirements have been upgraded, the facility has not," Wolf said.

Other deficiencies found by the state centered on food service and control over drug supplies.

On food service, investigators found problems with equipment maintenance, including dishwashers that did not work and resulted in employees washing

dishes by hand.

Also, hot food was allowed to become too cold and cold food became warm before it was served. "While it's not unsanitary, it's just plain unappetizing," Wolf said.

On drug supply, Wolf said officials surveyed 11 patients and discovered omissions in medication for four of them. "The random review indicated a failure to give the drug or a failure to record that it was given," Wolf said.

"We also found that drugs which were discontinued or outdated were not returned to the pharmacy for disposition, and in fact, were found in areas where they could be dispensed to patients."

He said SIDC submitted this week a "plan of corrective action" to address the Health Department report. That plan must be approved by the Health Department. Assuming it is implemented, the department will conduct another survey within three months "to see if they are doing what they said they would do," Wolf said.

Another survey was conducted

at SIDC last week, this one by the federal Health Care Finance Administration, which oversees agencies receiving Medicare or Medicaid monies.

A spokeswoman from the agency said its report has not yet been compiled, and therefore she could not comment on its findings.

However, she said, "I don't think we have any disagreements with the Health Department's findings."

Walsh said he was confident he could correct the shortcomings and satisfy state and federal investigators.

"They indicated that we had a number of major deficiencies, but with an acceptable plan of correction, they did not see any problems with continuing our funding," he said.

Webb is also confident that SIDC can overcome negative findings in the surveys.

"I'm not worried," he said. The federal Department of Health and Human Services "recently found the facility certifiable. I'm not certain everything is perfect, but when we have a problem we're going to correct it."

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