

STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE, Thursday, June 7, 1984

# 35 state employees relieved of duty

ALBANY (AP) — Thirty-five employees of the state's Manhattan Developmental Center were relieved of duty yesterday amid charges ranging from cocaine use and sale while on duty to patient abuse.

Arthur Webb, commissioner of the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, said the action came as the result of an eight-month undercover investigation by his office.

Webb said the state would be-

gin disciplinary proceedings against the 35 immediately with the intention of suspending them without pay and firing some of the workers.

The commissioner said the findings from the investigation were being turned over to the Manhattan district attorney's office for possible criminal prosecution. None of the 35 will be identified, said Webb, pending the filing of any criminal charges.

All 35 were relieved of duty

even before the disciplinary charges were filed in order to keep them out of the facility, said Webb.

"The anticipated charges are such that the individuals involved are considered to be a potential threat to the safety of the institution," according to a statement issued by Webb's office.

Webb said the charges against the employees would include "the sale and use of cocaine on the premises of the center, theft

of state property, client abuse, loan-starking, possession of a dangerous weapon and alcohol abuse while on duty."

During the undercover probe, Webb said his office used operatives from a private security agency and had assistance from the New York State Police.

The OMIDD investigation began late last year after the office received a number of complaints about activities at the center for the retarded, said Webb.