

NEW YORK POST

THURSDAY, AUGUST 2, 1984
DRAK PGRS, TUESDAY AUGUST 1984

RUPERT MURDOCH Publisher and Editor in Chief
ROGER WOOD Executive Editor

KEN CHANDLER, JOHN CANNING Managing Editors
BRUCE ROTHWELL Editorial Page Editor
STEVE DUNLEAVY Metropolitan Editor

Retarded need help, not promises

Staten Island Developmental Center was known around the world as Willowbrook a decade ago, and conditions then were horrifying.

Beset by congressional investigations, adverse national publicity and a series of suits filed by the parents of residents, state officials undertook to bring the facility into the 20th Century.

No more business as usual, they promised. No more subhuman conditions for our most helpless citizens.

But conditions at the center today are "appalling," says U.S. Health and Human Services Commissioner Margaret Heckler. "Major health and safety deficiencies" exist, she says, among them fire violations, filthy

conditions and excessive use of drugs to control patients.

State officials say Heckler's charges are based on dated information and that reforms are under way.

That's what they said 10 years ago.

Heckler's latest charges come in the wake of a decision by HHS to strip \$56.8 million in Medicaid funds from the state because of deficiencies in five other state schools.

This is not a minor matter. Clearly New York is not meeting its responsibility to the retarded.

The time for talk is long since past. If it takes a cut-off of federal funds to force the bureaucrats in Albany to do their duty, so be it.