

Cuomo encourages home care for disabled

By GEOFFREY TAYLOR

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Families will be financially encouraged to take care of their physically disabled children at home rather than in institutions under the provisions of newly enacted legislation.

Gov. Mario Cuomo signed a bill yesterday designed to encourage in-home care for physically disabled children by providing Medicaid eligibility for those whose cost of care at home is less than it would be in an institution.

"The bill," the governor said, "embodies compassion and common sense and recognizes that unnecessary institutionalization is too costly and too cruel when it deprives a young child of the nurture, support and love of parents, siblings and friends."

The need for the new law, he said, was best illustrated by the case of Katie Beckett of Iowa, who became the subject of national attention when President Reagan was made aware of her family's financial plight if they brought her daughter home from the hospital.

Her medical condition requires the use of a ventilator, but Medicaid provided no coverage of the expense outside an institu-

tion because the family's income was considered too high. The president ordered waivers from regulations in such cases.

Under the state's new law, physically disabled children will be able to receive Medicaid-financed care in the home, not withstanding family income, with eligibility determined at the local level.

"Up to 200 severely ill, physically disabled or multiply disabled children who now reside in hospitals, skilled nursing facilities or intermediate care facilities for the developmentally disabled will be able to return home if they can be cared for safely and at less cost than in an institution," Cuomo said.

"To those children who will, as a result of the bill, be reunited with their families, welcome home," the governor added as he signed the measure.