

Audit faults program for retarded

By RUTH LANDA

Retarded people living in private homes under the state's Family Care program are not receiving required health examinations, the homes themselves are not adequately inspected and some are unlicensed, according to an audit released yesterday by state Controller Edward Regan.

Auditors said many retarded people in the program—administered by the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities—do not receive required annual medical, dental and psychological examinations.

They also do not receive required monthly visits from office case managers, and when the visits are made "there is unsatisfactory documentation of the visit through progress notes," Regan said.

The audit, which examined the administration of the program for the year ending Oct. 31, 1983, focused on homes under the jurisdiction of five developmental cen-

ters—in the Bronx, Queens, Suffolk, Broome and Seneca counties—that supervise 1,300 of the state's 3,700 Family Care clients.

The report blamed the failures on the developmental office and made recommendations that agency officials "generally agreed with." Officials said they "were taking corrective action."

The audit found that licensing procedures for home providers were not being followed, and that required safety inspections of the homes were not frequent enough.

The Family Care program "was designed to provide

selected retarded persons with an opportunity to live in homelike settings, rather than institutions," Regan said. The providers are paid \$332 a month—about \$370 in New York City—for each patient.

But "as of June 1983, more than 10% of the agency's family care homes statewide

and 37% in the New York City region were operating without a valid license or operating certificate," a summary said.

Regan said the homes are supposed to be inspected and evaluated for safety twice a year, but nine of 11 Bronx homes surveyed and six of 10 in Queens "had not been evaluated for three years."

"Due to lax agency supervision in this area, one facility (Bronx) allowed a home with serious fire and structural deficiencies to continue to board six clients for two years after the hazardous conditions were first reported," the audit said.

Auditors found homes with client bedrooms that "were substandard in size or located in basements." Also found were inoperable smoke detectors and fire extinguishers, insufficient bathroom facilities and lower-than-acceptable ceilings.

The report advised the office to inspect and evaluate provider homes at least twice a year and to document the visits.