

Marchi predicts \$\$ for CSI-Willowbrook plans

Task force's final report might not mean anything

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ALBANY — The state budget will include money for planning a College of Staten Island (CSI) campus at the Staten Island Developmental Center (SIDC) property in Willowbrook, Senate Finance Committee Chairman John Marchi predicted yesterday.

The Staten Island lawmaker's forecast could come as a surprise to some community leaders, who had been promised that a decision on the disposition of the SIDC site would not be made until a state task force formally drafted its recommendation to Gov. Mario M. Cuomo.

The task force, which just last week presided over a standing-room-only hearing to gather public opinion on how the 300-acre site should be used, is expected to meet again this month to review numerous proposals and form its recommendation.

In his state budget request unveiled Jan. 22, Cuomo asked lawmakers to provide \$7 million for the initial cost of planning a merged campus for the overcrowded college.

Also included in Cuomo's \$38 billion state spending program was a sentence predicting that the SIDC will cease operations by the end of 1987, as previously expected.

Cuomo presented these two aspects in different sections of the budget. But Marchi said after a budget hearing yesterday regarding help for the mentally retarded that he expects the Willowbrook site to be linked in future budget documents to plans for CSI.

Earlier in the day, Assemblyman Robert A. Straniere, R-Dongan Hills, told the Advance that City University trustees, with whom he had just met, were asking that the SIDC site be listed in the governor's 30-day financial update, which is due Feb. 22.

Henrik Dullea, operations director in the Cuomo administration, said he had not heard the request from the City University trustees, who are on record as favoring the SIDC property for a merged campus.

"It's reasonable they would ask that, given the position of the board," Dullea said. "Whether we act in the 30-day period or act further down the road is something we will take a look at."

Noting that the SIDC task force has not completed its work, Dullea added, "We wouldn't do anything until we get the report from that group and the governor has released it."

But Marchi indicated yesterday that he expects the site to be made specific in the budget to be adopted for the fiscal year that begins April 1.

Asked if this would obviate the need for the task force, Marchi said the group could perform other functions if the college were picked for the site.

Marchi's made his comments after Arthur Y. Webb, state commissioner of the Office for the Mentally Retarded and Developmentally Disabled, testified before a joint legislative fiscal committee.

Assemblywoman Elizabeth A. Connelly, D-West Brighton, questioned Webb about the placement of mentally retarded taken from SIDC and other centers around the state.

For reasons that stem from the Willowbrook scandals of the early 1970s, placement of the retarded in community resi-

dences rather than big institutions is generally considered to be a sign of progress.

Webb reported that half of OMRDD's own placements to be made in fiscal 1985-86 will go to developmental centers, and half to group homes and other community residences.

But on closer examination, Connelly and aide Jim Clines noted a total of 1,414 placements due to be made in the coming fiscal year — 906 of them to developmental centers, 508 into community residences.

Webb's explanation of the apparent discrepancy centered on the fact that some 450 to 500 of those placed in developmental centers were sent under court order and eventually must be placed in community residences, Connelly said.

STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE, Wednesday, February 13, 1985