

# Marchi: Mental agency

## behind on computers

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ALBANY — The state agency assigned to serve the mentally retarded has failed to solve its computer problems, although \$12 million in state funds was appropriated for that purpose, according to a report released today by Sen. John J. Marchi.

Staffers for the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) failed to fulfill a legislative mandate to design an adequate management information system, according to the report.

"OMRDD currently shares a computer system with the Office of Mental Health (OMH) and claims that it requires its own computer hardware and software to develop and implement its own information system," Marchi, R-Staten Island, said.

However, he continued, "as of July 1984 OMRDD had not conducted the (electronic data pro-

cessing) planning required to justify the acquisition of its own computer."

Auditors found "OMRDD's needs might be accommodated by sharing computer resources with OMH." OMH administers mental health facilities such as the South Beach Psychiatric Center.

The report was released by the Legislative Commission on Expenditure Review (LCER), which Marchi heads because of

his chairmanship of the state Senate Finance Committee.

Marchi heads the LCER every other year, alternating in the job with Arthur Kremer, D-Long Beach, Assembly Ways and Means chairman.

"Most pressing" among the agency's computer needs is the ability to automate record-keeping for clients at the facilities, which include the Staten Island Developmental Center (SIDC)," the report notes.

In responses to the LCER report, both agencies said they have begun planning to ensure that the right choices are made for their computer needs.

Legislative leaders, meanwhile, changed Gov. Mario M. Cuomo's fiscal proposals so that the yearly state budget enacted here earlier this month includes \$200,000 less than originally proposed for funding OMRDD's electronic data planning process.

The lower expenditure "reflects a slower phase-in of the new computer system" than was earlier planned, Marchi is quoted as saying in a prepared statement released today with the report.

Budget language was written

"directing OMRDD to adhere to a careful planning and implementation process for the new information system that will be monitored by the Division of the Budget."

Preparations for release of the report were made here Friday, less than a day after the first published reports that OMRDD was coming under fire from the federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

HHS announced it had decided to cut off \$21 million in Medicaid funding to SIDC, alleging that the Willowbrook institution failed to achieve federally mandated service standards. OMRDD officials denounced the ruling as "unfounded."