

State panels to investigate SIDC attacks

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Two state Senate committees will investigate the circumstances surrounding recent attacks on two clients of the Staten Island Developmental Center (SIDC), Councilwoman Susan Molinari said yesterday.

Ms. Molinari said the beatings prompted her to call state Sen. Christopher J. Mega, chairman of the Senate Committee on Crime, earlier this week. The Brooklyn Republican said his panel would look into the incidents, Ms. Molinari said, and that Sen. Frank Padavan, chairman of the Senate Investigation Committee, would also conduct an inquiry.

In one incident, which was reported in the Advance, authorities said a severely retarded 22-year-old resident was admitted to Bayley Seton Hospital in a deep coma after being attacked by another resident. The beating occurred on Aug. 30 but a report to police was delayed until Sept. 4 while center officials conducted their own inquiry.

Ms. Molinari said she was informed of another beating incident, on Aug. 18, that resulted in a resident's hospitalization. The attack, which appeared to be the work of another resident, was not immediately reported to the family, who only learned he had been hospitalized when they paid a visit to the center, Ms. Molinari said.

"I'd like to think these are just isolated occurrences," Ms. Molinari said. "But we've had such bad experiences with the developmental center in the past that I think some questions should be asked."

Ms. Molinari was particularly

concerned about the "notification policies of the center toward the proper authorities and affected families."

"I'm also concerned about the apparent lack of supervision which would allow two seemingly identical situations to occur," she said. "Senators Mega and Padavan have agreed that these incidents, coupled with less life-threatening violations, demand that questions be asked. Their positions will enable them to more readily and clearly define the problems and obtain solutions."

The senators could not be reached for comment yesterday.

In one of the beating incidents, Darren Wranovics, who is in a coma and on a respirator, was apparently attacked by another client, identified only as a 37-year-old severely retarded man. Authorities said Wranovics had been punched and kicked, suffering massive head injuries.

The attacker, because of his mental condition, was not arrested or charged, according to police. But information on the incident was to be turned over to Staten Island District Attorney William Murphy.

It was unclear whether a staff member was present when the attack occurred.

Ms. Molinari said it appeared the Aug. 18 attack was the work of another center resident. She said that prior to the attack that sent him to the hospital, the victim, according to his family, was often bruised during physical encounters with other residents.

"I was surprised to learn of this incident since it was so similar to the other beating," she said.