

## Plan for Mentally Disabled Draws Opposition

ALBANY, Feb. 20 (AP) — A state plan to close six developmental centers for the mentally handicapped, including two in New York City, would swell the ranks of homeless and destitute people, opponents of the plan say.

"The proposal is a disaster," State Senator Frank Padavan, a Queens Republican, said this week. The State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, he said, "has no long-range plan to deal with the mentally disabled. It is just reacting based on budget figures."

In the state budget he submitted in January, Governor Cuomo proposed closing by 1991 two centers in New York City — at 75 Morton Street in Manhattan and 1200 Waters Place in the Morris Park section of the Bronx — one in White Plains and three others upstate, in Rome, Sonyea and Newark. The state has a total of 20 such centers.

The closings, which would displace 1,300 residents, are part of a trend of moving clients out of large institutions and into smaller community-based facilities.

Mr. Padavan, a member of the Senate Committee on Mental Hygiene, which held a joint hearing on the proposal Wednesday with the State Assembly's Mental Health Committee, said the state had not made adequate

provisions for placement of the mentally handicapped.

Representatives of mental health agencies, while agreeing that smaller residences provide more opportunities for self-reliance and development, said there are too few to absorb the additional clients.

"We agree with deinstitutionalization, but only with proper planning for taking care of the people who are displaced," said Marc Brandt, executive director of the New York Association for Retarded Children Inc., which represents 10,000 mentally handicapped adults and children in the state.

Mr. Brandt said the state must avoid placing clients in temporary homes as an interim measure if permanent beds are not available when the centers close. "Whatever the shortcomings of a development center, it is home for these individuals," he said, and "it wouldn't be right" to move them around.

Mr. Brandt said the proposal to close the development centers came as a surprise and has alarmed parents and relatives of clients.

But a spokesman for the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities contended that "it shouldn't have been a surprise."

"The factors involved in the decision

are well-known and well-documented," said the spokesman, Lou Ganim.

At the hearing, the office's Commissioner, Arthur Y. Webb, defended the plan as a commitment to community living for the mentally handicapped. "The mentally disabled have a right to be part of everyday society," he said.

Mr. Webb said the state was in the process of expanding its network of residential services.