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Reaching out to the disabled

State effort aimed at assessing needs

ADVANCE STAFF REPORT

Assemblywoman Elizabeth A. Connelly, D-Westerleigh, is urging Staten Islanders with developmental disabilities and their families to participate in "Outreach '94," a new effort aimed at assessing the needs of persons with developmental disabilities.

The information obtained will be used to better help the state plan community-based programs to serve the developmentally disabled. It will also help the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities in making its budget request to the state Legislature.

"The urgency of this information is obvious," Mrs. Connelly

said. "The key to Outreach '94 is that it places consumers and families at the center of the planning process," she said.

"With our state's shift toward a community-based mental health system of care and the passage of the Community Mental Health Resources Bill, which expands such services, the timing of Outreach '94 is perfect," Mrs. Connelly added.

To collect the needed information, she explained, the Outreach '94 campaign will make use of the recently revised "DDP4" form, now called the "Confidential Needs Identification" form. The form must be completed before June by all persons or families in

need of services.

"This is the time to come forward and be counted," Mrs. Connelly said. "If you are a person with a developmental disability, a family member, advocate or caregiver, I would strongly urge you to obtain and fill out" the revised form, she said.

Information about the Outreach '94 effort and the revised information forms is available by contacting the Staten Island Developmental Disabilities Service Office in Willowbrook, at 983-5278 or 351-7701. Callers should ask for the DDP4 coordinator or the information and exchange department.