—Nursing home

Continued from page 1

Lawrence Payne, acting director of MCAC, said all Medicaid patients are safe, and do not have to worry about being put out before they are placed in another facility, or are sent home.

Private patients who do not meet the new criteria will be able to stay where they are until their money runs out, Payne said.

Explaining the situation, Payne said that up to this time, nursing home eligibility requirements had been determined by Professional Standard Review Organizations.

The PSROs, (there were four of them) he said, set guidelines from county to county that differed from each other, and from the basic guidelines set up by the state.

Because of the variance in eligibility requirements, more patients were admitted to some nursing homes in some locations than in other places, pulling on the already beleagured Medicaid funding source.

PSROs, however, will be eliminated Sept. 30, Payne said, and all guidelines will be enforced by the state. He said criteria have not been changed, as charged, but said rather that current guidelines on the books will now simply be enforced.

Raffel, disturbed by the developments surrounding nursing home facilities, said that she fears an "inordinate" amount of people may be affected by the stiffer guidelines.

She charged that the state is saying that current nursing home patients don't need nursing home care, and said the state plans to send those individuals elsewhere, "whether or not those facilities exist or can afford them."

"The criteria for nursing home care is being moved so high that many people won't be able to qualify," she said. She added that when the new guidelines go into effect, approximately 80 percent of her patient load will be affected, seriously jeopardizing the future of Seton Hill Manor.

Raffel explained that despite the reprieve Maryland received on overall Medicaid cuts, reducing its total reduction to only 3 percent this year, a $26 million deficit within the state's medical assistance program still exists and said that the current rehashing of eligibility requirements is an attempt to retrieve some of that deficit.

But Payne disagreed. "I don't know where the $26 million figure comes from," he said. "Obviously, our attempt is designed to see that we spend only the money we're entitled to spend (in Medicaid funding.)

"We hope that by doing the things we're doing now, we'll eliminate the need for patient removal from nursing homes."

Payne stressed that no patient currently under nursing home care will be "put out," as feared by Raffel. All patients under Medicaid care will continue to receive the $40.91 daily allocation by the state as long as the nursing home shows it is trying to find other facilities for them.

Payne said determination of who is medically fit to leave the nursing home will be determined by a medical staff. Only those patients who require medical care "above the services of room and board" will be retained, he said.

Payne said the state will not impose any deadline on ineligible patients' removal from any nursing home facility.

(AFRO Photo by Roman Hankewycz)

PATIENTS THREATENED? — Administrators of the Seton Hill Manor Nursing Home says approximately 80 percent of their patient population could become ineligible for nursing home care when state guidelines are stiffened this fall.

—Prison policies

Continued from page 1

Jackson said that the city is prepared to accept a 'super-maximum' security prison, as well as a medium security facility.

Schmidt's announcement of the state's plans to build at least two more medium and maximum security prisons is a definite retreat from the policies of former Public Safety Secretary Gordon Kamka.

But, following Kamka's resignation three months ago, the stage was cleared for what many term a more "regressive" prison policy.

The emphasis now is on incarceration and not treatment, and if the words of one of the Legislative Commitee's members can be believed, maximum security institutions are the wave of the future.

"We made a mistake in listening to the former secretary of public safety..." said McDonogh, "What we need is more maximum security prisons and not minimum security institutions."

Several advocates of Community Adult Rehabilitation Centers,(CARC's), were on hand Monday night at City Hall to testify before the Legislative Committee, but it appears that their efforts may be in vain.

Although CARC's have not been totally excluded from state prison priorities, there is a chance that four such facilities currently on the drawing board will be abandoned.

—Downtown renewal

Continued from page 1

If they wait to come in, sure they'll be priced out. A lot of people will."

Montgomery is a staunch believer that downtown merchants are much to blame for the demise of the once-elegant retail district. Sensing a change in clientele and economic status of their customers, Montgomery says they downgraded their merchandise.

The better customers went to the suburbs (both black and white) because they could not find quality downtown, says Montgomery.

With the revitalization of the retail district looming, however, Montgomery says those same merchants will have to reverse their earlier actions. As more people come downtown, merchants are going to have to sell them what they want—or else still lose business.

With that in mind, Montgomery opened his hat shop, a quaint and exclusive parlor selling hats that range anywhere from $60 upward. All of them, he says, are top quality. It's the only way to go.

According to Tom Hutchinson, president of Murdock Development Corp. plans underway should create jobs and people. Primarily a project to develop office space, the Murdock plan does call for 100,000 square feet of new retail space.

Vacant department stores will become, supposedly, hubs of activity once again.

"There was no particular plan considered which dealt only with what redevelopment of this area would mean for blacks and poorer people," Hutchinson explained. "But what is going to happen is that there are going to be more jobs, and more people with spending power.

"What the merchants need is more people," Hutchinson said. "I in no way agree that a revitalization plan automatically eliminates or excludes any part of the population. More people downtown and more jobs doesn't mean bad news to me."

C. William Pacy, president of the Market Center Development Corporation which has had primary responsibility of finding a developer for the Howard -Lexington St. corridor, agrees with Hutchinson.

"What (Hutchinson) is selling you is exactly right," Pacy said.

"The retail area as it was in 1936 is never going to occur again," he said. "This area will take its place as an office area.

"But the development of the area is not going to exclude anyone. At least 2,000-6,000 construction jobs will be created when things get started, and after the project is completed, there should be anywhere from 6,000 to 16,000 office jobs created."

Pacy said that with the additional people, with money to spend, no one should be "left out." Of the 100,000 square feet of retail space committed by the Murdock Company, Pacy said exclusivity will not be the norm. It will cater, he said, to the people, in ways they can afford.

"I think we're trying to make a mountain out of a molehill," he said. "The flow of economics will dictate what will happen. I think it's going to be a nice tourist trap, with stores the average person can afford to frequent."

Blasting what he calls a lack of pride on the part of current downtown merchants, Pacy was careful to make the distinction between pride and money.

"What we see downtown now is an attitude that says we're going to keep a nice dirty store so we can pull in anyone..." Pacy said that the merchants have lost customers themselves by not caring about their shops and their merchandise, all the while looking to the city and the mayor to bail them out.

Of the possibility of black businessmen being excluded from the Murdock business space, Pacy acknowledged, as did Montgomery, that there might be a problem.

"Given the amount of money it will take to develop this thing, it's going to require high rental fees, perhaps as high as $28 a square foot." He said that government assistance for blacks would probably be close to impossible at this time, with the Reagan administration seeking to lessen government dependence.

But problems aside, Pacy sees hope for black businessmen and consumers, as does Carl Montgomery.

"Black people are consumers," said Montgomery, "whether we can afford it or not. All we have to do...is get our place downtown now."

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