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Fund Hike Sought

Retarded Facilities Hit

HARRISBURG (UPI) — Claiming conditions are terrible and staffing inadequate, the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens (PARC) Monday asked the legislature to increase funds for state schools and hospitals by \$12.6 million annually.

Norman Mulgrave, regional vice president for PARC, said conditions at nine of the 10 state schools and hospitals "are getting worse because of inadequate funding over a long period of time. The conditions are deteriorating."

Mulgrave said he got the \$12.6 million figure by calling all of the schools and hospitals—which are exclusively for treatment of the retarded—and asking their administrators how much they would need to solve staffing problems.

Mulgrave and several other PARC members and members of the Parents Group at Western State School and Hospital, Canonsburg, said their request for more money was prompted by the death of a teenager at Western last Wednesday. He choked on a piece of meat.

Mrs. Ginny Thornburgh said there have been 450 deaths at state schools and hospitals over the past two years, adding "at least a third to a half of them are suspicious, or questionable deaths." The median age of most of the deaths was between 35 and 40, she said.

Budget Secretary Charles McIntosh, who attended the meeting with PARC representatives and several Senators and legislators from the Pittsburgh area, said the state has little money left in its

treasury for appropriations this fiscal year.

"We know there is a need in the state schools and hospitals," he said. "But we have other basic and terrible needs too, in Welfare, in the Department of Corrections. We only have money to cover about \$10 million in appropriations."

"Why are we in this position?" McIntosh asked. He blamed the lack of funds of a tax cut approved earlier this year that cost some \$300 million, and increases in the school subsidy formulas that cost most than \$130 million.

McIntosh said the only way the budget office could pay for an increase to state schools and hospitals would be for the legislature to drop its plans to pass any other spending bills for the remainder of the year.