



James, a staff emergency resident at the Francis Hospitality Center, reads in the resident area where up to eight beds are available for overnight visitors.

S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

## Budget cuts

Continued from page 1

But at least one Catholic social service advocate dismisses this notion that taxpayers will choose to continue to fund social services abandoned by the state.

"Do you seriously think that if people's taxes went down several hundred dollars a year, they would donate that to charity?" asked Lucy DeChaine, diocesan director of the state-funded Community Services. "People are going to spend that money on what they want, or what their family wants."

U.S. citizens and foundations have a decent record of giving to charity, explained DeChaine, whose office provides at-home services to adults with disabilities or who are HIV-positive. Yet, she pointed out that little private funding is available for the day-to-day operational budgets of social service agencies. Donors usually cannot provide that type of money, and private foundations usually only want to provide agencies start-up grants, she added.

"They do not want to be responsible for staff salaries and programs," she said.

Indeed, by eliminating the monies necessary to maintain consistent levels of social service, Bishop Hubbard and other observers claim that the proposed 1995-96 state budget may do more harm than good in the end. They believe that by aggravating poverty through social service cuts now, taxpayers may have to ante up more dollars later to pay for the social costs that may result.

Some observers unfamiliar with the social service world may wonder what the fuss is all about. What does the church, a private institution, have to do with state social welfare policy anyway? As it turns out, plenty.

Contrary to popular impressions that church agencies receive the bulk of their funding from donations by the faithful, Catholic Charities, like many other not-for-profit agencies, actually administers numerous programs for the poor, disabled and elderly that can and do only exist because of state funding.

Earlier in this century, the state government chose to funnel social service monies to private agencies financially overburdened with requests for assistance, Buttegieg noted. He added that in exchange for government funding, these agencies often pick up the tab for administrative costs by using private do-



Shown here visiting Carol Ann Kozlowsky, Lucy DeChaine (right) is director of diocesan Community Services, which receives state funding and provides at-home visits to adults with disabilities and those who are HIV-positive.

nations that are also often earmarked for agencies' services that the government will not fund.

The state gets bigger bang for its buck, according to Buttegieg, because it does not have to deal with the kind of bureaucratic overhead that often leads to inefficiency and waste in programs run directly by the state.

In this diocese, government funding is essential to Catholic Charities, according to its annual report (see pages 11-14), which notes that its agencies received almost \$9 million in government fees and grants in 1994, out of a total revenue of more than \$15 million.

Through its regional and diocesan offices, Catholic Charities offers nutrition programs, housing assistance, mental and physical health services and other forms of outreach.

In addition to services funded in part or wholly by the government, a number of people served by Catholic Charities receive some sort of public assistance separate from that administered by the agency. Hence, any cuts in such assistance may mean people could wind up knocking at the agencies' doors for help, observers said.

Jack Balinsky, diocesan director of Catholic Charities, noted that it is still unclear what impact the proposed budget would have on specific programs if

it is passed. Indeed, his colleague, Anthony Barbaro, director of Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier, noted that his agency's plans to expand mental health services are indefinitely on hold until the budget's impact on his office is clearer.

However, Balinsky and directors of the diocese's three regional Catholic Charities offices and community and residential services are sure that Pataki's budget could mean a host of ills for the clientele they serve.

Carolyn Portanova, executive director of Rochester's Catholic Family Center, fears that deep cuts in welfare and other social services would force poor men, women and children back onto the streets, and mean a return to the 1980s when diocesan parishes operated a shelter network that was overwhelmed with clientele needing far more services than just a bed to sleep.

"I think what we're going to see is a larger homeless population with a larger variety of needs," agreed Paul Pickering, director of Catholic Charities' Community and Residential Services.

Pickering's view was echoed by Giovina Carosco, executive director of Finger Lakes Social Ministry.

"People will come to our office because they don't know where to go," she predicts.

## Agency leader: Welfare reform could backfire

By Patricia Zapor  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Republican reform proposals aimed at forcing welfare recipients to take more responsibility will hurt needy children without necessarily changing their parents' behavior, the president of Catholic Charities USA told a congressional committee.

"Our founder could feed 5,000 people with a few loaves of bread and fish, and while we may try the same, it is neither sound social policy nor responsible government to put people's lives in jeopardy in hope of miracles," Jesuit Father Fred Kammer told the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources Jan. 30.

Through such agencies as Catholic Charities, the Catholic Church has 250 years of experience in helping the people targeted by reforms in the Personal Responsibility Act, Father Kammer said.

As much as the current system needs reforming, some well-intentioned changes could backfire, according to Father Kammer, "leaving us with more dependency, more child abuse and neglect, more teen pregnancy and even more abortions."

Of particular concern to Catholic Charities are proposals to exclude children from receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children because they were born to unmarried teens, to mothers already on welfare or to children for whom paternity has not been legally established.

Father Kammer predicted that a "child exclusion" provision in the Personal Responsibility Act would lead to increases in teen pregnancies; abortions among teens and other women; and the number of abused and neglected children who wind up in foster care.

Economic threats also will be ineffective for young girls who yearn to have babies for someone to love, and for teens who are unrealistic about their inability to earn money or get it from the welfare department, he said.

Other concerns about the welfare proposals in Father Kammer's prepared testimony include:

- Plans to deny cash assistance to unmarried mothers under 18 who do not live with their own families. Father Kammer said he agreed such girls should not be simply handed their checks and sent on their way. He recommended family counseling, training, tutoring and other assistance to teens who live with their parents or in a residence for mothers and babies. Under the House proposal, aid to such teens would simply be eliminated.

- The "family cap" provision to stop paying additional benefits when children are born to welfare recipients. "If AFDC benefit levels provided adequate incomes to support children, the family cap would not be so dangerous. But AFDC benefits are woefully inadequate in every state," he said.

- Limits on how long a household can receive welfare benefits. "As many Republican and Democratic governors have pointed out, despite their best efforts, there will not be jobs for all parents who need them."

- Elimination of benefits to immigrants. Most immigrants helped by Catholic Charities do not need public assistance, the priest said. But "we should not turn our backs on the relatives of hard-working immigrant taxpayers who do need assistance."