

**Pro Bono****PUBLIC INTEREST PROJECTS**

BY THOMAS ADCOCK

**Mentally Ill Gain Legal Voice**

A federal class action on behalf of mentally ill residents at Ocean View Manor Home for Adults was filed late last month in the Eastern District by attorneys at Pillsbury Winthrop, who claim that staff members of the Coney Island institution routinely withhold residents' monthly income as a means of behavior control.

"Ocean View and its operator have an obligation to help residents with money management and personal care," said Susan Kohlman, managing partner at Pillsbury, "not to punish them by denying access to what is legally theirs."

*Cortigiano v. Ocean View Manor*, CV 04 4677, claims Ocean View has violated the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Pillsbury's pro bono client in the action is MFY Legal Services, where managing attorney Jeanette Zelhof and staff attorney Lycette Nelson are co-counsel.

Ms. Nelson said she has not yet been advised by Ocean View who will act as defense attorney for the home.