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Willowbrook Patients Now Top Total at Shrunken Halloran

Willowbrook State School now has a patient census far exceeding that of neighboring Halloran VA Hospital, although there are still more persons employed at Halloran than by the Department of Mental Hygiene facility.

This was indicated today by figures released by Halloran and Willowbrook. These showed that 461 medical and staff employes have been dropped or transferred by Halloran since the state-federal decision last April to reduce Halloran in order to make way for Willowbrook expansion.

While the number of employes at Halloran has fallen off steadily, the total of persons hired by Willowbrook has mounted. The present number of medical staff and other personnel employed there is 553, highest in the history of the Department of Mental Hygiene.

HALLORAN'S FIGURES indicate that the total number of employes has been reduced to

895 from a high of 1,356 when New York State, owner of the Halloran tract, and the federal government agreed to reduce the hospital's size.

Officials at Halloran said, however, that the reduction in personnel in conjunction with this decision has now come to an end. The hospital has a listed bed capacity of 692 even though only 603 patients are being treated there.

This was termed "normal" by Halloran officials, who point out that all hospitals must leave beds available for emergency or, in Halloran's case, for treatment on short notice of veterans with service-connected disabilities.

WHILE the number of patients at Halloran has fallen off rapidly, the total of patients at Willowbrook has mounted to 1,965, many of them babies, according to Dr. Harold H. Berman, director.

Employees have been taken on by Willowbrook during the past year by

indicated. Dr. Berman pointed out that 106 persons were hired there in August and 130 last month. A comparative number are being employed there this month, he said.

Halloran officials said, in the meantime, that few jobs remain open there, but point out that there still is a need for "a few" staff nurses.

AT WILLOWBROOK, Dr. Berman said all the buildings turned over for Willowbrook's use as a result of the April decision are now being used. He said rehabilitation of Halloran's former auditorium building has been completed.

This building now contains Willowbrook's administrative and medical offices, classrooms, nursing staff headquarters, occupational therapy and the auditorium which is used for dancing, movies and entertainments.

Dr. Berman said that, with the assistance of the State Department of Social Welfare, it is possible to organize a basketball team among the patients this fall.