

Willowbrook Hit Again as 'Negligent'

New charges of negligence — growing from the death of an 8-year-old mentally retarded girl who died of pneumonia 11 days after her admittance — faced Willowbrook State School authorities today.

In a letter to Governor Harri-man, urging an investigation, Fuasto Iber, a Manhattan building superintendent, charged that his daughter, Maria, died Feb. 11 because of the school's failure to provide proper care and medical attention.

Iber, who has two other children, is suing the state for \$5,556 in damages.

Dr. Harold H. Berman, superintendent of the school, said "those charges were thoroughly investigated and there is no foundation for them whatsoever." He said the child received every possible care and medication and that every effort was made to treat her.

Meanwhile, in Albany, Acting Commissioner of Mental Hygiene Arthur W. Pense said he was "certainly investigating all the facts in the case."

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ONLY LAST TUESDAY the school was cleared of charges brought by a Buffalo father who claimed he found welts and bruises on the body of his speechless, 5-year-old daughter.

Iber, in his letter to the governor, released yesterday by his attorney, said the child was admitted to the school Feb. 1 in "good health."

But when he visited her with his wife on the day of her death she was nothing but "skin and bones," he said, adding that she was "obviously a victim of malnutrition."

The letter said:

"Although they remained with the child all day long until 8:30 P.M., they saw no evidence of medical attention. Mr. and Mrs. Iber, of course, have no way of knowing at this time the full details of the maltreatment of their child prior to Feb. 11; however, they related other details which appear to indicate a definite neglect of Marla and other defective children who are unable to care for themselves."

Iber said that his child had been "healthy and happy" at home. He added that he wasn't informed of his daughter's illness until Feb. 11—the day she died.

"The parents are firmly convinced that this death was the result of neglect of their child and they are demanding an investigation in the hope that other children may be spared a similar fate," the letter stated.