

State School on Its Way To Enrollment of 6,000

Already the largest treatment and care center for the mentally retarded in the nation, Willowbrook State School soon will be able to expand its overall patient enrollment to well over 6,000, it was reported today.

The further expansion in the number of patients on the institution's rolls will be made possible, officials said, by an increase in the number of non-ambulatory mentally retarded children, most of them spastics, being transferred to the facility's annex at Gouverneur Hospital, Manhattan.

Dr. Harold Berman, director of Willowbrook, said 54 such patients already are being treated at Gouverneur Hospital, although they still are technically on the rolls of Willowbrook School, a facility of the state Department of Mental Hygiene.

He said a group of 30 other patients will be assigned to Gouverneur early next week, thus increasing the number of accommodations available at Willowbrook itself.

DR. BERMAN said that up to 250 of Willowbrook's child patients will be assigned to Gouverneur by spring and that the transfers will open up an equal number of accommodations at Willowbrook.

The institution's director said that while completion of the state's recent \$8½-million expansion program allowed for a vast increase in the number of patients being treated there, a waiting list made up mostly of children under 5 years of age still remains.

He said accommodations made available at Willowbrook as a result of the transfer of patients to the Manhattan annex will be "of great service" in shortening the list of mentally retarded small children on the waiting list.

THERE ARE 5,734 patients actually being treated at Willowbrook. Another 179 patients tech-

nically are on the Willowbrook rolls, although they are presently convalescing with their families or are assigned under a family care program in private homes.

The accommodations at Gouverneur Hospital were made possible last August when the Mental Hygiene Department signed a lease with the city making five floors in the main hospital building available as an annex to the Island institution. Dr. Berman also directs the Gouverneur Hospital program.

The enrollment of patients at Willowbrook State School has increased by nearly 1,000 over the past three years.

LARGELY RESPONSIBLE for the increase has been the opening of five new infirmary buildings, a large kitchen and a new cafeteria under the state's big construction program there.

Prior to the construction program, accommodations were so few in state institutions for the mentally retarded that only "hardship cases" were being admitted.

Only two other state institutions for the mentally retarded come near to Willowbrook's size. They are Rome State School, with a patient enrollment of 5,051, and Letchworth Village in Thiells, with 4,928.

STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1962

Student Nurses At Willowbrook Feted at Tea

A tea for 16 student nurses, affiliates from Manhattan State Hospital School of Nursing, was held yesterday at Willowbrook State School's Building 46 by the Willowbrook Registered Nurses Club.

Hostesses were Miss Mary Kelly, nursing school principal at Willowbrook, and Mrs. Antoinette Foster of the clinic staff.