

New Research Institute Slated for Willowbrook

A new research institute for mental retardation, planned for Staten Island by the State Department of Mental Hygiene, will be constructed on a site adjoining Willowbrook State School.

When announcement of the project was made recently there were indications it might be built on the site of the planned mental hospital in Ocean Breeze.

Dr. Paul H. Hoch, commissioner of the department, clarified this yesterday in a conference with Assemblyman Lucio F. Russo. Both the hospital at Ocean Breeze and the research center at Willowbrook are slated for construction next year, according to the assemblyman.

Commissioner Hoch explained that we have a research center now at Willowbrook State School, under the supervision of Dr. Harold H. Berman medical director of the institution," Russo said. "This center will continue. The department is seeking to begin construction next year of an additional research institute on an adjoining site which will operate under the direction of Dr. George A. Jervis.

"While patients at Willowbrook State School will benefit directly and probably figure in the research, the center will be a separate institution. Dr. Hoch said that a second such research institution is planned for a community on Long Island and that the cost of both has been estimated, at \$5.5 million."

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THE ASSEMBLYMAN said the commissioner noted, however, that while these funds have been included in the new state budget, the Senate Finance Committee is seeking to cut \$30 million from the budget before it is acted on by the Legislature. Included in its proposed deletions are the two research centers.

Russo said that the Department of Mental Hygiene and the state director of the budget are fighting to prevent the items from being stricken from the budget.

If they are dropped, he said, an effort will be made to in-

clude the funds in next year's budget. This would mean that construction could not start until 1964.

Dr. Hoch told Russo that the mental hospital project at South Beach will be built under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Works, but that the state as yet has not obtained complete title to all parcels in the 200-acre tract.

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CONSTRUCTION is expected to start next year, with the initial buildings to provide accommodations for 800 patients.

Original plans called for a 3,000-bed hospital. Whether the institution will ultimately be en-

larged to meet original plans is indefinite at present, Russo said.

"The Ocean Breeze hospital," said Russo, "is to be built primarily to meet the needs of State Islanders who have members of their families in state institutions.

"Of course, patients from other boroughs will also be treated here, but Commissioner Hoch has assured me that its principal purpose will be to serve Staten Islanders, to make it unnecessary for their families to have to travel to Long Island or upstate institutions, as is now the case."

The institution will also provide out-patient treatment, the commissioner told Russo.