

Doctors Best Qualified to Aid Retarded, Says School Director

The medical profession must stay at the head of state institutions for the mentally retarded, Dr. Harold H. Berman, director of the Willowbrook State School, advocated yesterday in a talk before the Staten Island Kiwanis Club.

Dr. Berman urged the public to oppose legislation which would place in charge of such institutions psychologists, teachers or persons other than doctors and psychiatrists, as has been proposed before the Legislature for several years.

He then pointed out the work that has been done at Willowbrook by doctors in the line of care and in research.

The talk was given at the service club's luncheon meeting at the Meurot Club, conducted by John D. Stefano, president. Dr. Berman was introduced by Dr. John J. Goller, a Kiwanis member.

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CARE OF the mentally retarded is a problem for the community, the speaker said. In the past, he explained, such cases were placed in institutions in the mistaken idea of protecting the public.

To avoid stigma, such institutions were designated as schools but in time the public attitude has changed so that now the objective is the care causes.

It has been learned now, Dr.

Berman said, that a child's mental retardation may be caused before birth because of physical illness contracted by an expectant mother. He praised research along these lines which has been conducted at Willowbrook State School.