

Dr. Hoch: 'Psychiatrist With 86,000 Patients'

By DANIEL FOLEY

When Dr. Paul Henry Hoch became State Commissioner of Mental Hygiene in 1955, he brought to that post all the instincts of the psychiatric researcher he had been for many years.

Characteristically, he commented soon after his appointment, "My job is like a research project to me. It is a chance to put into operation some of my ideas—to test them."

REDUCED CASE LOADS

The "ideas" proved effective. Dr. Hoch, in his calm imperturbable way, showed great ability for reducing case loads. As Commissioner, he inherited 116,000 patients throughout the state's vast network of mental institutions.

By 1962, an interviewer was able to describe him as "the psychiatrist with 86,000 patients," that being the number to which he had reduced his statewide responsibility.

At Dr. Hoch's death last night in Albany at the age of 62, his passion for experimentation was opening new horizons in the solution of the dope addiction problem.

PRAISED BY ROCKY

The Governor called Dr. Hoch "a wonderfully warm, understanding human being . . . one of the great researchers in mental hygiene in the nation and in the world."

Dr. Hoch was originally named to his state post on July 7, 1955 by former Gov. W. Averell Harriman. He was reappointed twice by Gov. Rockefeller, most recently on Jan. 15, 1963.

A native of Budapest, Hungary, he received his medical training at the University of Goettingen, Germany. He was director of the outpatient dept. and the brain research division of the Neuropsychiatric Clinic at that university from 1930 to 1933 when he came to the U.S.

In a statement on the narcotics problem earlier this year, he said strict law enforcement was required, particularly against "the racketeers who flood the market with narcotics."

He blamed "slums and other depressed social conditions" for the number of addicts.

Dr. Hoch's wife, the former Barbara Griffith of Brooklyn, survives.