

DAILY NEWS

New York, N.Y., 10017, Tuesday, September 14, 1965*

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FINAL

Dems Ask \$ Now for Retarded

The Democratic majority leadership of the Legislature called upon Gov. Rockefeller yesterday to institute an immediate "crash program", including a doubling of the number of attendants, to meet "the most pressing needs" of the state's institutions for the mentally retarded.

Sen. Harry Kraf, chairman of the Joint Legislative Committee on Mental Retardation, sent the Governor a telegram urging him to seek a "certificate of intent" from the legislative leaders so that remedial measures can be taken at once without waiting for the Legislature to reconvene in January.

Leaders Go Along

Senate Majority Leader Joseph Zaretki and Assembly Speaker Anthony J. Travia told reporters they would readily sign such a certificate. This would pledge their party's legislators to vote

for an appropriation to finance the program.

Rockefeller denounced the Democrats' call as "shockingly hypocritical." He declared that the Democratic majorities last winter "knocked out of my budget \$3.5 million in operating funds for the Department of Mental Hygiene—\$1.5 million of which was for more attendants, more nurses and more doctors for care of the mentally retarded."

The cuts were restored near the end of the session—"only upon my insistence and that of the Republican minority leadership," Rockefeller said. Furthermore, he

charged, the delay held up the personnel recruitment programs for three months.

Since then, however, the Governor continued, the number of attendants and ward personnel has been increased in the current budget by 17%, and money is available for adding 1,700 new jobs. "And since the supplemental budget was approved in late June, we have already filled 500 positions."

Rocky said a new staffing program for educational, recreational, and occupational programs

which is now in effect "will triple the number of occupational therapy personnel, double the recreation staff and increase the number of teaching positions by 25%."

Without mentioning Sen. Robert F. Kennedy by name, Rockefeller took a swipe last night at Kennedy's charges in a nappareance before the Kraf Committee last week that the state was shameful neglecting its mentally retarded.

Defends His Program

In a letter to the State Planning Committee on Mental Disorders, the Governor spiritedly defended his administration's efforts and declared that "no other state—in fact, no nation—can cite a comparable achievement in dealing with mental instability."

In fact, he wrote, the master plan for "bold new programs" which was adopted in 1962 on his recommendation was "so outstanding" that it served as a blueprint for the federal program presented to Congress by the late President Kennedy.

Earlier in the day, the Governor told reporters that the 67-

year-old Gouverneur Hospital in New York City is being used as a shelter for about 200 retarded children only as a "purely temporary crisis provision."

He said it would be abandoned as soon as possible and the youngsters transferred to other institutions. Although he did not know just when Gouverneur will be closed, he added that "the money being spent by the state to rehabilitate it makes it useable for the time being."

10-Year Lapse Seen

Dr. Jack Hammond, director of Gouverneur's parent institution, the Willowbrook State School on Staten Island, claimed yesterday that it will take 10 years to transfer the youngsters from the turn-of-the-century building.

He said the new Suffolk State School in Melville, L.I., will relieve crowded conditions at Willowbrook when completed this month. The children at Gouverneur will have to remain where they are, he said, until a new hospital for retarded children is built, in an estimated 10 years.

Gouverneur is still being used, another official said, because Manhattan residents find it easier to visit their children here than at schools outside the borough.

DAILY NEWS, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1965

BETTER MENTAL HEALTH CARE

—Is outlined in an impressive report just issued, after long study, by the New York State Committee on Mental Disorders.

Some mental institutions have drawn the shocked attention of THE NEWS, and then of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy (D-N.Y.)—notably Willowbrook State School for the retarded on Staten Island.

Mental Disorders Committee Report

The above-named committee's most important recommendation is that some 150 community mental health centers be set up around the state, to be administered by local people.

This setup ought to be far superior to a few giant institutions where, be the operators' intentions ever so good, some patients are almost certain to be slighted if nothing worse.

Let's get the Mental Disorders committee reforms rolling as soon as may be.