

State Urged to Form New Mental Agency

SARATOGA SPRINGS (AP)—Formation of a state Department of Mental Retardation, separate from the Department of Mental Hygiene, was urged yesterday.

Joseph T. Weingold, executive director of the New York State Association for Retarded Children, also called for the abolition of the state's Mental Hygiene Facilities Improvement Fund, because parents and guardians of presently institutionalized patients are charged, he said.

Weingold spoke at an association convention.

He said that, since other handicapped persons use state facilities at no cost, a similar provision should be made for the mentally retarded.

Weingold said that, "in 38 years of the existence of the Department of Mental Hygiene, we have finally arrived at the present state of services for the retarded. The department has failed utterly to meet the standards of care in rehabilita-

tion for the patient in the state schools for the mentally retarded.

"It would be completely useless to reorganize the department when mental retardation is a very secondary consideration in comparison to mental illness."

Eight state school employees, including one at Willowbrook on Staten Island, received awards for "outstanding work performance in the interest of the mentally retarded."

Clarence Stevens of 244 Lindenwood Rd., Great Kills, maintenance department supervisor at Willowbrook was cited

Willowbrook Boss Talks to Grand Jury

Dr. Jack Hammond, director of Willowbrook State School, testified for more than three hours yesterday before the grand jury investigating the accidental deaths of three residents of the institution earlier this year.

Dr. Hammond, who signed a waiver of immunity prior to testifying, reportedly discussed the deaths and the circumstances surrounding them, including overcrowding, the shortage of trained personnel, the condition of buildings and budgetary problems.

Conditions at the school have been sharply criticized in recent weeks, prompting Gov. Rockefeller to step into the controversy.

The governor has set a Dec. 1 deadline for relieving overcrowded conditions at the school. However, relief is not expected for at least several months. The school has 5,900 mentally retarded residents.

Two of the residents died as a result of being scalded while showering. The third was strangled by a restraining device.

The grand jury will meet again Nov. 9.

Patient's Mom

Praises School

I am a mother of a child residing at Willowbrook State School and would like to say a word or two on behalf of the attendants and other personnel at the school.

As a member of the Benevolent Society for Retarded Children I am on both the Entertainment and Sunshine Committees. Because of this I have had the opportunity to visit every building and every ward and dormitory of each building.

I have never seen a child mistreated by anyone. I have seen children reach out to hug and kiss or jump into the arms of the attendants and were hugged and kissed with affection in return. Some children get more love here than they would at home.

Yes, many of the children are neglected, but it is not willful neglect. One attendant cannot take care of 60 or 80 children and give them every attention they need. Nor can one doctor attend 1800 children and do it thoroughly.

We owe these overworked, sympathetic and devoted people our sincere appreciation and thanks for their work and devotion.

And to Dr. Jack Hammond, the director of Willowbrook State School, our love and our thanks.

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