

Transfer to Reduce Jam at Willowbrook

400 Patients To Be Moved To Suffolk

ADVANCE ALBANY BUREAU

ALBANY—The Department of Mental Hygiene, in an effort to reduce overcrowding at Willowbrook State School, will transfer 400 patients to a new state school in Suffolk County during the next four months, it was reported today by Assemblyman Edward J. Amann Jr.

In addition, according to Amann, the department has asked for sufficient funds in a supplemental state budget to provide for the construction of 10 more portable buildings at the Staten Island facility, each to accommodate 30 patients. These would be in addition to 10 now under construction.

A spokesman said today that the present patient-population of Willowbrook State School is 5,382 and that if the department's plans are carried out it would "help enormously" to reduce overcrowding at the institution.

He said the state plan will not eliminate overcrowding entirely, as there is a long waiting list of patients seeking admission.

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AMANN contacted Gov. Rockefeller and Dr. Allen Miller, commissioner of the Department of Mental Hygiene, several weeks ago, requesting that funds be provided for 10 additional portable buildings at Willowbrook and offering his help in any way possible to reduce overcrowding at the facility.

He received a letter from Rockefeller yesterday, he said, explaining that some 400 patients whose families live in Queens, Nassau and Suffolk Counties will be transferred during the next four months to a new facility under construction in Suffolk County.

As construction of the Long Island facility is advanced and more buildings open, additional patients will be transferred there from the Island, the governor said.

The governor also noted that the Mental Hygiene Department has requested funds for additional portables at Willowbrook.

Miller advised Amann that he has requested supplemental budget funds for 24 additional portable buildings for the downstate area and that if these funds are provided, 10 of the buildings will be erected at Willowbrook.