

## State Aide Defends 'Guinea Pig' Tests

By TERENCE SMITH

The State Commissioner of Mental Hygiene said yesterday that the hepatitis research program conducted at Willowbrook State Hospital on Staten Island had all but eliminated the disease among patients there.

Dr. Alan D. Miller issued his statement in reply to charges that mentally retarded children at the hospital had been used as "human guinea pigs" and injected with live hepatitis germs.

The charges were made Tuesday by State Senator Seymour R. Thaler, Queens Democrat, in a sweeping indictment of city and state hospital practices that he delivered on the floor of the Senate in Albany.

Dr. Miller said the program "to develop immunization against hepatitis has been under way at Willowbrook for the past 11 years in cooperation

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## STATE AIDE BACKS TESTS AT HOSPITAL

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with the New York University-Bellevue Medical Center."

Noting that the retarded children were particularly susceptible to hepatitis, he said: "The direct, measurable result of the program has been an 80 to 85 per cent reduction in the incidence of hepatitis at Willowbrook for both the patients and employes."

Among patients, the incidence has dropped from 4 per cent to 0.3 per cent; among employes, from 5 per cent to 0.5 per cent, the Commissioner said.

### Another Charge Denied

Another of Senator Thaler's allegations was denied yesterday. The Senator had said that a 23-year-old woman at Harlem Hospital recently underwent a hysterectomy without her consent to demonstrate the operative procedure to internes and residents.

Mr. Thaler cited Dr. Clarence Hogans, who, he said, was on the hospital's staff, as his source for the charge.

Dr. Hogans denied yesterday that he had told the Senator that the operation was done without the woman's consent and to demonstrate the operative procedure.

"He added that part," Dr. Hogans declared. "I merely told him that the operation had been performed and that in my opinion it wasn't necessary. The woman had a normal uterus."

"I was chairman of the tissue committee at the hospital at the time, and the report that came to us said the patient's uterus was removed because of a pelvic inflammatory disease—to relieve pain."

"Well, you don't remove the uterus from a 23-year-old woman to relieve pain, at least not without prior psychiatric examination."

Dr. Hogans said that he had "no knowledge" as to whether the operation was done without the patient's consent, and that he had "certainly" not told Senator Thaler that it was done to demonstrate procedure.

Reached last night, Senator Thaler challenged the doctor's denial.

"Dr. Hogans certainly left me

with the impression that the woman did not give her informed consent to the removal of her uterus," he said.

"As a matter of fact, he gave me the distinct impression that she did not know she was going to have a hysterectomy. He also gave me the decided impression that the operation was performed for teacher training purposes."

Dr. Donald P. Swartz, director of obstetrics and gynecology at Harlem, denied on Tuesday that any surgery had been performed

at Harlem without the written consent of the patient, or to demonstrate technique.

Dr. Miller, discussing the hepatitis program at Willowbrook, said the study had been carried out under grants from the Department of the Army's Research and Development Command.

"During the entire period of study," he said, "no more than 20 children have been in the program at any one time, and no more than four groups have been treated in a year."