

## Willowbrook Defended by Health Chief

ALBANY (AP) — The state commissioner of mental hygiene defended yesterday a research-immunization program involving children at the Willowbrook State School on Staten Island.

Dr. Alan D. Miller commented in connection with a statement by State Sen. Seymour Thaler, D-Queens, that children at Willowbrook had been injected with live hepatitis virus for clinical research.

Thaler also questioned on the Senate floor Tuesday that all of the parents involved had given their consent.

Miller declared yesterday that the children at Willowbrook had been given gamma globulin, a vaccine containing live virus designed to build up immunity to hepatitis.

"The program is carried out according to standard immunization procedures," Miller said, "and no child has even been harmed in any way as a consequence of the study. Written parental consent is obtained in every instance."

The commissioner said the program to develop immunization against hepatitis had been in operation at Willowbrook for the past 11 years in cooperation with the New York University-Bellevue Medical Center.

The study has been carried out, Miller said, under grants from the U.S. Army's Research and Development Command.

A 20-bed research section and

## Says Thaler Errs on Child 'Guinea Pigs'

By RICHARD MATHIEU  
Staff Correspondent of THE NEWS

Albany, Jan. 11—State Mental Hygiene Commissioner Alan D. Miller has answered charges that doctors at Willowbrook State School on Staten Island used child patients as "guinea pigs," injecting them with live hepatitis virus without parental consent.

Miller said today that the charges, made by State Sen. Seymour Thaler (D-Queens) yesterday, stemmed from an immunization program that cut Willowbrook's incidence of hepatitis by 80 to 85% over the last 11 years.

Thaler, in a Senate speech, asserted that "over 500 children" aged 3 to 9 had been injected with the hepatitis virus even though it had nothing to do with their illnesses.

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Miller retorted today: "During the entire period of the study, no more than 20 children have been in the program at any one time and no more than four groups in a year. The program is carried out according to standard immunization procedures and no child has ever been harmed in any way as a consequence of the study. Written parental consent is obtained in every instance."

He said the program has been under way at the school in cooperation with the New York University-Bellevue Medical Center.

He said that the armed forces have reported that immunization programs based on the Willowbrook study already have brought substantial results in the reduction of hepatitis among servicemen.