

## Hammond: No transfers to Suffolk

There will be no transfer of mentally retarded children from Willowbrook State School to Suffolk State School, according to Willowbrook's director, Dr. Jack Hammond.

Hammond said 60 children, whose parents live in Nassau and Suffolk counties, were due to be transferred to the Melville, L.I., school, but "in the face of opposition from parents of children at Suffolk School we have decided to wait."

In a telegram to Hammond, Suffolk State School parents announced their intention to physically block the entrance to Willowbrook transfers. They contend there would not be enough employes at Suffolk to adequately handle the new children.

Meanwhile, in Manhattan yesterday, State Supreme Court Justice Xavier C. Riccobono reserved decision on a move by parents of mentally retarded children to block their transfer from

Gouverneur Hospital in Manhattan to the island institution.

The state Mental Hygiene Department has proposed the closing of Gouverneur, a 79-year-old institution on the Lower East Side, as an economy measure forced by fiscal cutbacks.

Gerald Sneps, attorney for the parents, contended that cutbacks could have been achieved by fuller utilization of several other state facilities. He argued that only the State Legislature has the power to close these institutions.

Assistant Attorney General Robert S. Hammer said the decision to transfer the children was reached "in a manner to have the least impact on the mentally retarded." Sneps replied that Willowbrook is overcrowded and as recently as last month transferred 17 of its patients to Gouverneur.

Sneps argued that the assignment of the 194 patients from Gouverneur to Willowbrook "will spell the death of many of them." He said that Willowbrook did not have sufficient staff to handle "its present overload."

Some 75 parents, carrying signs protesting the proposed transfer, marched outside the Supreme Court building for more than an hour in the rain.