

Willowbrook budget boosted

Will provide better care, says Rocky

Gov. Rockefeller announced yesterday that \$5 million will be borrowed from next year's Department of Mental Hygiene budget to make this year's situation at places like Willowbrook State School, a little less critical.

The money — which will be deducted from next year's \$600 million budget — will mean that Willowbrook can find 300 positions of the nearly 1,000 which should be filled.

Dr. Jack Hammond, director of Willowbrook, estimated that "most of the new personnel will be attendant staff — those working directly with the patients."

Willowbrook — the largest of the state institutions — received the biggest chunk of the \$5 million and authorization for the hiring of the most new workers.

Letchworth Village, a mental institution in Rockland County, will hire 200 new people; Was-saic State School is authorized for 100, and Brooklyn and Manhattan State Hospitals will share 100 in additional personnel.

Rockefeller explained the sudden availability of money by saying that: "The action taken by the Legislature on my tax proposals . . . has made it possible to raise the expenditure levels for the Department of Mental Hygiene from \$580 million to \$600 million."

The governor said that the balance of the \$20 million available for the next fiscal year, will be divided among the state's institutions starting April 1.

The additional attendant staff at Willowbrook, will mean slightly better care for those profoundly retarded patients who, with the existing patient staff ratio, are virtually abandoned.

Feeding time, which had been cut to four minutes when 40 or more children had to be cared for by one attendant, will be expanded.

Children who were eligible for special programs at the institution but couldn't be taken from their wards to the appropriate buildings because of the lack of staff, may now be re-involved in educational programs.