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For Afflicted Children

Adults still have a lot to learn about mental retardation; they might increase their knowledge by encouraging some of the afflicted children to become dropouts from such institutions as the Willowbrook State School.

That is one of the theories underlying some new state legislation being introduced in Albany today by Assemblyman Stein (D, L-Man.), head of a Democratic-sponsored study of Willowbrook and other state mental hygiene facilities. A major goal is to reduce overcrowding and the squalor it inevitably produces by reducing the patient populations.

One alternative, already tested

successfully in a number of privately operated programs, is day care for the mentally retarded in small, community-based centers. The Stein legislation would seek, in this connection, to involve the families of patients in the process of mental hygiene policy-making; in fact, laymen would have controlling votes on community programs for the retarded.

Stein's modest hope is that his bill will be a source of fresh ideas for amendments and redrafting of the present laws. It is already one of the more heartening results of this state's recent confrontation with degradation and despair at Willowbrook.