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No quick solution for Willowbrook

Funds bar patient transfer

By RAYMOND A. WITTEK

An additional appropriation of \$60 million would be required over three years to significantly reduce the population of Willowbrook State School, says the school's director, Dr. Jack Hammond.

The Legislature would have to appropriate \$10 million the first year to open and operate three new facilities to accommodate a total of 1,350 patients, said Dr. Hammond.

Thereafter, he said, \$20 million would be needed to operate the facilities in the second year and \$30 million in

the third year. Dr. Hammond made the statements today when asked about his remarks before the Joint Legislative Committee on the Mentally and Physically Handicapped in Albany last week.

Dr. Hammond said "no one is going anywhere" at Willowbrook at present, and emphasized that any proposals to reduce the population of the school would be dependent on the allocation of additional appropriations to the State Mental Hygiene Department.

The school now has 5,100 residents and since last month there has been a total freeze

on new admissions, Dr. Hammond said. Since 1965, he added, there has been a partial freeze, with only about 200 of the more severe cases being admitted each year.

Dr. Hammond said he personally favors a population of about 3,200 patients at Willowbrook — a number which he indicated complies with national standards. Older standards fixed the school's capacity at 4,500 — 600 less than the school's present population. If the Legislature were to furnish the Mental Hygiene Department with the additional \$60 million, Dr. Hammond said it would enable the department

to open the three facilities and bring about an approximate 25 per cent reduction in Willowbrook's population. The three additional facilities are the newly constructed Brooklyn State School, which has been completed, but which the Mental Hygiene Department has been unable to open because of a lack of funds, and two smaller facilities which were turned over to the department by the Narcotic Addiction Control Commission (NAACC) — the victim, like the Mental Hygiene Department, of a reduced budget.

The former NAACC facilities had approximately 1,600 children on its waiting list in Queens and Sheridan Square Facility in Manhattan. Each has a capacity for 300 patients, while Brooklyn State School could accommodate 750 patients. Despite the furor that emerged as a result of reports of neglect and mistreatment at Willowbrook and other state institutions for the mentally retarded, the state continues to receive 40 to 50 applications a month from troubled families.

New applications are processed by a metropolitan area retardation department, Dr. Hammond said. At the time of the January freeze, Willowbrook had approximately 1,600 children on its waiting list.