

chief of the Division of Mental Retardation. "Willowbrook didn't happen overnight. It is part of a program that has developed since the turn of the century when society wanted to segregate its retarded in huge, isolated facilities.

"One thing we intend to do reasonably quickly — within the next two years — is to reduce Willowbrook's population to decent space standards. We will not send any more people out there and we will resettle thousands of those who are already there. But the eventual phasing out will take several years."

At least part of this resettling program should involve hostels, but New York seems to be moving exceedingly slowly in this direction. It has scheduled only eight additional group homes to be set up during the next fiscal year.

Even though they have far fewer institutionalized retardates, other states see the need for hostels as being more urgent. Michigan, for example, has just embarked on a \$5 million program to build 40 to 50 new group homes with six to 16 adult retardates in each. The State of Washington expects to move between 200 and 250 institutional residents into new hostels over the next two years, at a cost of \$1.4 million. Washington already has 25 hostels serving 336 retardates ranging from pre-teen boys and girls to 20 elderly ladies who had spent most of their lives together in a state institution.

"The group home program has been one of the great breakthroughs in providing for the needs of the mentally retarded," says Dr. Samuel Ornstein, chief of Washington's Office of Developmental Disabilities. "They provide an individual with the opportunity to progress at his own rate, unhampered by the artificial confines of an institutional ward."

Connecticut, which has 25 group homes, "should have 125," according to Francis P. Kelley, Superintendent of the Mansfield State Training School for the retarded in Mansfield Depot, Conn. "This is a program that legislators can understand," he says, "because it costs less than half of what it costs to keep people in institutions." But during the coming year, only two new hostels are expected to be opened in the Nutmeg State.

New Jersey, which boasts an extensive network of day-care centers for the retarded, has only two group homes, both operated by local chapters of the Association for Retarded Children. For the past decade, the Garden State has also been moving the mildly retarded into regular boarding homes in the community, where they have been able to function virtually on their own. In its seven institutions, New Jersey now has less than 7,000 residents, about one-fourth of New York's total.

"For three years, we have had a request in under the state capital improvement program for \$11.8 million to construct 19 hostels," says

Bernard White, deputy director of the Division of Mental Retardation for the State of New Jersey.

"We figure that this would take care of current needs. The big hangup is that the state doesn't have the money."

The excuses put forward by fiscally embarrassed federal, state and municipal officials are unacceptable to the parents of retarded children, who see the hangup as one of mixed-up priorities. They reason that if money can be found for other social reform programs for people who are physically and mentally self-sufficient, then money should also be found for innocent children who are far more dependent upon society.

"The group that yells the loudest gets the money," says Anthony De Simone, Associate Regional Commissioner for Rehabilitation Services of the Health, Education and Welfare Department. "Who the hell is going to yell for the retarded, outside of a small group of parents and dedicated professionals in the field? Unfortunately, the retarded are America's silent minority."

For institutional care of the retarded, American taxpayers are spending about \$1.3 billion a year (vs. \$3 billion for the U.S. space budget). At Willowbrook, the annual cost per resident is \$5,500 — which is less than the cost of caring for the two Chinese pandas at Washington's National Zoo.

"It boils down to 74 cents a day for food and 15 cents a day for clothing for the kids at Willowbrook," says Joseph Weingold. "How the hell can you feed anybody on that? The mentally retarded are getting short-changed all the way down the line from the federal government to the local municipalities. When it comes to mental health budgeting, the retarded are thrown in with the mentally ill, the emotionally disturbed, the alcoholic and the narcotic addict, and the retarded always wind up with the short end of the stick."

Although he is defensive about New York's treatment of the retarded, Dr. Grunberg admits that they have been getting less than their fair share of public funds.

"Frankly, I don't think any agency of government is contributing enough in this area," he says, "even though New York spent \$183 million last year on direct services for the mentally retarded plus an additional \$50 million for state-aided programs like the hostels and the other activities of the voluntary agencies.

"Many more millions also go to the retarded through the Medicaid program, the state Social Services Department, the local public school systems and other organs of government. But it's still not enough. Considering the need, all services for the mentally disabled have tended to be underfinanced."

Money isn't the only obstacle to the establishment of more hostels, however. "Community