

Willowbrook loss confirmed

Dr. George Warner, an administrator in the State Health Department, admitted yesterday that Willowbrook State School lost more than \$8 million in federal revenue last June, when it was reclassified from a skilled nursing to an intermediate care facility. Under questioning by Rep. Mario Biaggi, D-N.Y., in Brooklyn Supreme Court, Dr. Warner testified that the institution was reclassified, after the results of a state survey indicated it couldn't meet skilled nursing facility standards based on the ratio of nurses to patients, housekeeping chores and record-keeping levels. The state says it requested the change in the Island institution's status, as well as the other schools, to prevent the loss of the entire \$88 million it receives for Willowbrook and 10 other state institutions.

Biaggi, who instituted an action in Supreme Court seven months ago to improve conditions at Willowbrook, said yesterday this "acceptance of lower standards" resulted in a total loss of \$36 million in Medicaid payments.

He also accused the state Mental Hygiene Department of trying to hide the facts from the public.

The summation is slated for Friday at 2 p.m. unless the state presents a defense.