

# Rocky Tabs 35M for Willowbrook Revamp

By ROGER WETHERINGTON  
Gov. Rockefeller's proposed budget for care of the retarded is considered large enough to end overcrowding at Willowbrook on schedule by March 31, 1974, officials responsible for the Staten Island institution said last week.

In a progress report, they said they viewed the governor's \$35.5 million budget request for Willowbrook as sufficient to continue an existing program—that would increase staffing and transfer some 2,000 Willowbrook residents to smaller community-based institutions or to foster homes.

## Hope to Regain Accreditation

The officials said that the end of overcrowding could make it possible to provide training for all Willowbrook residents and possibly regain the institution's lost accreditation as a skilled nursing home.

The officials made their assertions in affidavits filed in Brooklyn Federal Court, where a suit accusing the state of violating the civil rights of Willowbrook's residents is pending. The affidavits in-

formed the court of developments at Willowbrook, the officials said.

The affidavits were greeted with some cautious praise and some skepticism. Joseph J. Weingold, executive director of the State Association for the Retarded Children, plaintiff in the action, called the moves to end overcrowding "welcome" and a "step in the right direction."

## Hopes for Quicker Action

"But if they're really going to do all these things," he added, "why don't they consent to our suit? That's what leads us to wonder whether they'll carry out what they say they are going to do." He also called for faster movement and less emphasis on the mentally ill at the expense of the retarded.

Two of the affidavits were by Dr. Frederic Grunberg, the state's deputy mental hygiene commissioner in charge of facilities for the retarded, and Dr. Miodrag Ristic, director of Willowbrook. The proposed budget for Willowbrook in fiscal 1974 is \$4.5 million higher than the budget for the current year, Grunberg said in his affidavit.

If it is approved by the Legislature, Grunberg

added, the program for reducing Willowbrook's population to 3,200 should continue on schedule. There were 5,200 retarded children and adults living in Willowbrook's facilities in January 1972 and there are 4,600 patients there today, Grunberg said.

## Plan Was Offered in July '72

The plan to reduce overcrowding was first outlined by Grunberg in an affidavit to the court in July 1972.

Bruce Ennis, the New York Civil Liberties Union lawyer trying the case on behalf of the Association for Retarded Children, charged that the latest affidavits were "misleading."

The case, pending before Judge Orrin Judd, is a class action. The lawyers do not expect a decision for at least a month.

Another case, brought in State Supreme Court in Staten Island by Rep. Mario Biaggi (D-R-C-N.Y.) on behalf of the parents of Adrienne Renelli, 22, a Willowbrook resident, was decided last week. Justice Vito J. Titone ruled that the State Department of Mental Hygiene had violated state laws, and directed it to train Miss Renelli to the limit of her abilities.