

# Willowbrook aide denies charges

By POLLY KUMMEL

Dr. Cora Baldos, psychologist and team leader in Building 23 at Willowbrook State School who was the subject of discussion at an employes' meeting Wednesday, said yesterday she was unaware the session had been called. Wednesday is Dr. Baldos' day off.

She said, however, that she was aware that some of the staff members weren't completely satisfied with her leadership. "Mr. Sweet (Robert Sweet, director of personnel) said they wanted to talk to me. I said, 'Why not?' I'd rather discuss things. I'm a very democratic person.

"I like everyone to communicate their feelings," Dr. Baldos continued. "As a team leader, I like cooperation and to have pleasant relationships at work. Therefore, I would like to meet with them very much.

"My door is always open to them. They know that, although it has to remain physically closed because otherwise there would be residents wandering in all the time for no reason. I have told them to come to me — even with a personal problem. So I waited for Mr. Sweet to call me about having a meeting. He didn't call, so I thought this was taken care of."

The team leader expressed shock and dismay at the allegations which her staff had made during the three-hour meeting.

Among the charges which the employes leveled was that she seldom met with the staff to discuss programs for the residents.

"Whatever decisions that require opinions and evaluations, I try to discuss with the staff one by one," Dr. Baldos said. "It is not true that

I called only one meeting till recently. It is true that I only called them a few times, but no one could ever come because we are understaffed — so why call them? The patients have to be taken care of.

## AWARE OF NEED

"I am very, very aware of the different needs of the residents. I have an encompassing idea of everything they need. As soon as I assessed those needs after I got here (Nov. 21), I started working from bottom to top and all around.

"When I arrived, there was no furniture — not in the offices, not in the wards. I made acquisition orders for furniture and clothes, and they told me it would take three to six months to get them. We still haven't gotten anything from the business office.

"My main concern is this: If we think the residents are entitled to being treated as human beings, we must provide the basic things to make them act like human beings.

"The biggest need I had was to get more employes — all kinds — and equipment from the service. I tried very hard to leave no stone unturned.

"When I made requisitions, I talked to the departments concerned, wrote letters, made phone calls. I wrote to Dr. Ristic (Miodrag Ristic, director of Willowbrook) and gave him my staff requirements and I went to all the departments to get different, new staff members. Fourteen new people are due to arrive Monday.

"For four months, we had no ward clerk, no secretary, no steno — I have had to do most everything myself.

"The needs of Building 23 are so huge, so overwhelming that I have tried to get supplies, to get everything we need from all angles.

"I am very well aware of the clothes problem. Every time I made rounds on my own, I found people naked. This is either because they don't like to wear clothes or because they tear them to pieces till finally there are very few left.

"We give them to the laundry and we don't get them back. And we don't get replacements for the torn clothes. Part of the program we're trying to implement involves residents going to the school in our basement. But many times they can't go down there because they don't have any clothes.

"These are young adults we are talking about. They have very healthy appetites and no place to burn the energy. Many are hyperactive, anyway. So they break cabinets, chairs, beds.

"So you can see, I do know their needs. I have been trying to set up a program and start

it under the most adverse conditions. I couldn't get more people to supervise ward activities and motivation programs, so I assigned those people we have to start. Most of them aren't trained in this type of therapy.

"And much of the time they just can't do a program because they also have to take care of the ward problems. The overall design of a program has to be foregone until they have time to do it.

"But there must be some activity on the wards. People can't just sit there. So you use crayons, push and pulls for motivation. You have to get them to react to situations instead of just sitting and losing track of reality.

"My population is profoundly retarded. But they need to be self-fulfilled and self-satisfied — it begets a good image of

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