

# Feds Move in to Aid In Willowbrook Suit

By ROBERT KAPPSTATTER

The federal government moved last week to step into a suit to improve conditions at the Willowbrook State School for Mentally Retarded Children.

Citing its \$60 million annual allocation of funds to the state for mental retardation programs, the government asked Brooklyn Federal Court Judge Orrin G. Judd to let it join as a "friend of the court" a suit brought by parents of children there and by the New York State Association of Retarded Children.

The government's move came as Judd toughened an earlier preliminary injunction order to the state involving the staff-patient ration at the Staten Island hospital.

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He ordered that his previously imposed 1-to-9 staff to patient ratio include only "on-the-ward, direct-care staff."

Housekeeping, laundry room and various other personnel he ordered, cannot be lumped into the ratio, which was ordered April 12.

He also ordered all Willowbrook residents be given at least five days of outdoor recreation in addition to improved indoor recreation unless a doctor rules out any individual participation.

The government's motion filed by the Civil Rights division of

the Justice Department and by U.S. Attorney Robert A. Morse, stated that the United States "would endeavor to provide experts in the field of care for the mentally retarded and such other assistance that the court may require."

In a statement by Morse, he said, "Our position is that the mentally retarded are entitled to the assurance that their rights will be protected by a federal presence, not because the state may not do it, but because the federal government has a separate responsibility to the mentally retarded where its money is used."

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