

# State policy hit on retarded

Councilman Carter Burden of Manhattan yesterday charged that most state facilities for the mentally handicapped, including Willowbrook State School, are "dumping" mentally retarded persons into the community without creating adequate supportive services for them.

"The policy," he said, "that the state Department of Mental Hygiene adopted in 1968 in regard to the chronically mentally ill is apparently being taken over by the state homes for the mentally retarded."

Burden's remarks came during a City Council Health Committee hearing on the lack of non-residential centers for

treatment of former mental patients held yesterday in City Hall. Burden is chairman of the committee.

It was reported during the hearing that since 1968 state facilities for the mentally ill have cut their patient populations by 50 per cent, discharging some 40,000 persons statewide, mostly the elderly.

"At the same time," Burden said, "there has been no increase in state funding for community based facilities for the care and treatment of these people. The need is for the state to meet its responsibility in this and begin to provide treatment and housing facilities."

Rapping what he called the "widespread" use of nursing and proprietary care homes for older mental patients or retarded persons, Burden claimed that such institutions "don't provide adequate psychiatric care." He urged the establishment of "specifically designed rehabilitation centers and half-way houses adopted to the specific needs of the mentally ill and mentally retarded."

Yesterday's hearing kicked off a committee investigation that will result in specific recommendations, Burden said. The next hearing, which is yet to be scheduled, will focus on the plight of mental patients in proprietary homes, welfare hotels and nursing homes.

Representatives of the city Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, the state Department of Mental Hygiene, the Department of Social Services and several individual treatment programs attended yesterday's hearing.