

## Ristich denies patients 'running around naked'

Dr. Miodrag Ristich, director of Willowbrook State School, yesterday denied allegations by the Willowbrook Chapter of the Benevolent Society for Retarded Children that the institution is "holding back" clothing from patients in preparation for an open house program Sunday.

Dr. Ristich branded the society's accusations as "lies" but he admitted Willowbrook faces a laundry shortage due to the unreliability of its New Jersey laundry service.

The complaint that patients were "running around naked" and deprived of the chance to spend time outdoors was made by John Dickens, executive director of the Benevolent Society.

Dickens said he received reports from staff members that clothing was being saved for Sunday so the institution could put on a good show for visitors.

Dickens contacted Robert Delaney, deputy director of the Mental Health Information

Service, who referred the complaint to James Truncell, a senior attorney in the organization whose office is located in Willowbrook.

Truncell investigated the situation and reported that the allegations were exaggerated. He said there were clothing shortages, but the buildings were being kept warm and the patients were encouraged to remain in their nightclothes.

Delaney announced yesterday that he is sending a letter to Dr. Ristich asking that steps be taken to correct the situation.

He said he did not believe the patients were being deliberately deprived of clothing, but whether or not the Benevolent Society's allegations were true, steps should be taken to avoid this type of incident.

Willowbrook is planning to reopen its own laundry facilities, which will eliminate the problem, although it may take a few days to alleviate the present shortage, Dr. Ristich said.