

70% of work done at Willowbrook

Center laundry facilities open

Laundry facilities at Willowbrook Developmental Center have been reopened as modernization of the plant nears completion and 70 per cent of the center's laundry is now serviced there.

According to Michael Ranaldo, manager of central laundry services for the State Department of Mental Hygiene, the remaining 30 per cent, which is all flat work (sheets, pillow cases, hand towels), will continue to be cleaned by a New Jersey firm until flat ironing equipment is back into service at Willowbrook.

Ranaldo said the amount of clothing returned to resident buildings daily had increased by 30 per cent since laundry facilities opened last Monday.

"As we initiate a new system in which laundry from each resident facility is processed daily, we expect that the return will increase even further," he explained.

"Our target date for doing 100 per cent of the laundry at Willowbrook is next April," he added.

During the past 10 months, laundry was sent to Premier Laundry in New Jersey, a subdivision of the Bronx company,

Linens of the Week. Willowbrook's laundry employees were involved, in the meantime, in preparation, receiving and distribution.

A four-man task force from Albany, headed by Stephen Zultan, director of laundry and housekeeping services for the State Hygiene Department, has been coordinating the reorganization and moder-

nization, including painting and installation of new equipment.

While contracting with the New Jersey laundry service, Willowbrook's clothes would be sent out one day and not returned for 48 hours.

In May there were allegations that the institution was not properly clothing the residents. However, Dr. Miodrag Ristich, Willowbrook director, said at

that time that the center was facing a laundry shortage due to the "unreliability" of its New Jersey firm.

Under the new system, clothes can be sent to the plant and be returned the same day.

Willowbrook laundry employees last month learned to use new equipment at a training session at Rockland Psychiatric Center.