

Nurse tells of finding maggots in Willowbrook boy's wounds

By SUSAN FRY

A nurse said yesterday in Brooklyn Federal Court that maggots were found in a leg wound of an 8-year-old resident of Willowbrook Developmental Center when he was admitted to the U.S. Public Health Service Hospital, Clifton, last month.

Miss Juanita Huttar, the hospital nurse who was subpoenaed to testify, said the boy's cast was moldy and had an "extremely foul odor." It was discolored and broken in several places, she said, and in an ulcerated area under the partial body cast, maggots and a large bug were found.

The boy was originally admitted to the Clifton hospital in June for a broken bone in the upper right leg. He was readmitted from the Willowbrook infirmary Sept. 1 for "neglect," she said.

If left in that condition, she said, the bone could not have healed, possibly causing a bone and blood infection and death.

"We pulled the cast off by hand because it was soft. Usually we use a cast cutter," she added.

In another instance, Miss Huttar said a 14-year-old Willowbrook resident had been admitted last spring with multiple bruises and cuts on his head, hands, legs and back. His eyes were black and swollen, she said, and he had an ear infection.

Although the diabetic child was self-abusive and consistently banged his head, Miss Huttar claimed he calmed down when insulin and other medication were adjusted.

"We padded the sides of his bed and restrained his arms, but many times the restraints

were unnecessary," she added. When he was released, she said, his wounds were healed and he was ambulatory. Two days later, on June 5, the boy was readmitted and looked like "he had been worked over by a two-by-four."

"The two attendants who were with him were laughing and one said, 'He doesn't like us, so I guess you'll have to keep him.'"

Miss Huttar said the boy had multiple cuts on his face and scalp and his "forehead was spongy."

"They (the attendants) said he didn't like his helmet (a head guard) anymore, so he took it off and started to bang his head again. I was suspicious about his injuries being self-inflicted."

Miss Huttar said pediatricians at the hospital thought there was a possibility of neglect and filed child abuse papers with the city Bureau of Child Welfare.

"They wouldn't accept the case since he is a resident of Willowbrook," she claimed.

In other testimony before Judge Orrin G. Judd, Willowbrook speech and hearing therapist, Zoe Ann Mazur, claimed that even if residents are fitted with hearing aids, they are not allowed to wear them in the wards.

"The attendants don't want to take the responsibility for them," she said.

She also charged that therapy records are sometimes inaccurate and, in one instance, a report indicated that one resident

had been examined 20 times in the month when, she said, he had been examined four times.

Some therapists will do an entire month's report at one

time, instead of daily," she said.

She also said many residents were able to speak in full sentences when they were admitted to the institution, but can now only say, "hello, hello, hello."

Two research analysts in the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Justice Department testified that resident evaluation records indicated "deterioration" in their development.

Cheryl Matheis of Arlington, Va., cited examples of "regression" and specifically mentioned a 24-year-old man in Building 8 whose intelligence quotient in 1955 was 108 and in 1965 was 11.

Another analyst, Joan Varley of Washington, D.C., said that the average weight of 11-year-olds at Willowbrook is 43 pounds, based on studies she had done at the institution. (The median weight for 11-year-old boys is 78.9 pounds and girls, 82.)

The fifth day of hearings yesterday was part of a class action suit against former Gov. Rockefeller and the state. Plaintiffs, who are parents of Willowbrook residents and the New York State Association for Retarded Children, are seeking relief for residents of Willowbrook, based on a constitutional right of protection from harm.

Plaintiffs are scheduled to resume testimony Oct. 29. Defendants will present their case Nov. 11.

Attorneys for plaintiffs include the New York Civil Liberties Union and the Legal Aid Society. The state is represented by the state attorney general's office.