

Willowbrook parents seek greater powers

Parents of Willowbrook Developmental Center residents met last night with members of the Board of Visitors, Willowbrook employes, and Assemblyman Guy Molinari to ask for a larger share of participation in Willowbrook's operations.

The parents brought up six points which they wish the board to convey to Gov. Carey, and which they hope to take up with the Department of Mental Hygiene. They are:

- Access to the master construction plan;
- The cessation of geographic unitization;
- The separation of the mentally ill from the mentally re-

tarded;

- Total parent participation;
- A discussion on the reasons for the high employe turnover rate;
- And the creation of an overall review board.

While many of the parents' points are simple requests for a greater share of involvement, such as the review board, access to the master construction plan, and an integrated participation with Willowbrook employes in the center's daily operations, others pertain to more specific aspects.

By geographic reunification the parents are referring to a plan which would separate

Willowbrook residents by boroughs, so that, for example, all residents from Staten Island would utilize about five buildings. According to the parents, this would force all the patients, regardless of sex or illness, to live together, which would be both unhealthy and impractical.

The parents also wish to keep the mentally ill segregated from the mentally retarded, maintaining that the retarded learn much through mimicry and that they should not be given the opportunity to mimic the wrong people.

Finally, the parents wish to refute the statements of Lawrence C. Kolb, the new commissioner of the Department of Mental Hygiene, who called for a respite from criticism on Willowbrook because of the adverse effects it was having on the staff. Charles Olson, a spokesman for the parents, claims that "the Department of Mental Hygiene has made repeated promises and they have never kept their promises. They have lied." He also stated, "It is not the bad publicity, it is the bad conditions..."