

Editorial page

Our opinion

An obligation is being met

Despite considerable hassling at Albany, the money to improve conditions at Willowbrook Developmental Center in accord with an out-of-court consent decree is finally to be made available through a special reserve fund proposed by Gov. Carey.

The consent decree was the result of a suit brought by families and friends of Willowbrook's retarded charges alleging that conditions at the state institution were intolerable. With the funds now at hand, the improvements which have been vital, including a transfer of several hundred patients to other facilities, can get under way.

Overcrowding has been one of the most serious problems at Willowbrook. And Dr. Lawrence Kolb, commissioner of Mental Hygiene, says that contributed to bad management and poor employe morale, both of which make conditions for the state's charges there far less than ideal.

Proper care is the right of any patient. It has been denied far too long to all those humans who have as concerned people charge, been "filed away" at state institutions. Originally called a "state school," which provided totally inadequate teaching and training, Willowbrook was given its new "developmental center" title last year. We Staten Islanders will be watching to see whether what develops with these new funds is sufficient.

Willowbrook To Get \$11M

Albany, July 8 (News Bureau)—As an apparent concession to State Sen. John Marchi (R-Staten Island), Gov. Carey will pump more than half his supplementary budget, about \$11 million, into improvements at the Willowbrook State School for the mentally handicapped on Staten Island.

Carey's money, plus \$3.4 million from the Senate, will go toward hiring 555 full-time employes and toward renovations at the school, the establishment of a South Beach Psychiatric Center on Staten Island and the establishment of a state park in Dongan Hills.

—Thomas Postler