

Mental transferees worse off than before

(From Page 1)

dents to facilities in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens and Suffolk, Wassaic and Westchester Counties. Those residents were to receive the benefits of the consent decree.

As the Review Panel report points out, however, none of the Willowbrook-related facilities comply. "Far too many sleeping areas still consist of large open wards with little or no individual furniture or decorations," the report says.

"Even worse are the bathroom areas, where privacy is typically not provided and the necessary supplies (toilet tissue, soap, towels) are not readily available," the report adds.

The panel's most "disturbing" findings concerned staffing deficits (as high as 60 per cent in some facilities), and the lack of six hours of daily programming. About programming the panel found that:

¶ Five-hundred ex-Willowbrook residents need toilet training; only 108 are in toilet-training programs.

¶ Four-hundred and fourteen ex-residents are not self-feeders, but only 138 are in self-feeding programs.

¶ Of 395 non-ambulatory ex-residents, only 139 are receiving physical therapy services.

¶ Of 706 non-verbal ex-Willowbrook residents, 426 are receiving speech therapy services.

Furthermore, the panel auditors found inappropriate age groupings in 11 of 12 facilities surveyed; lack of privacy in all but one facility; inappropriate clothing, and unsuitable policy and procedure manuals.

Perhaps the worst center audited by the panel was the Gouverneur Service Center in Manhattan where, the report says, none of the 164 ex-Willowbrook residents have required development plans; where only three residents are

receiving six hours of programming; where all residents needs toilet training but where none are receiving it, and where only 26 of 96 needy residents are receiving physical therapy.

At the Keener Service Center in Manhattan, the panel found a document which said that "residents being toilet trained are still eating their meals in the lavatory."

At the Howard Park Unit of Queens Developmental Center, the panel found, a policies and procedures manual contains nothing more than the language in the Willowbrook Consent Decree. "This document merely parrots the language without such a policy in evidence," the report says.

The report cites eight examples at Howard Park where staff noted that the consent decree could not be implemented because the retarded population makes it "both unrealistic and impractical."

Because of the "severity of the residents' disability, the use of toothpaste and toothbrushes are impractical," says one Howard Park manual.