

against measles," he said.

Several parents were alarmed, however, when Dr. Spielman explained that there is neither a commercially available vaccine against type B hepatitis or a cure for it. He attempted to allay their fears by pointing to the statistics that indicate the body's ability to fully recover from the illness.

Dr. Spielman told of a recent study of five carriers and about 200 persons the carriers came in contact with. Some changes in liver chemistry were reported, he said, but no one contracted type B hepatitis. He added that about one in 1,000 persons are carriers, and that, statistically at least, possibly 100 teachers and students in the school system were carrying the disease.

He believed that under the proper precautions, which include the thorough washing of hands and eating utensils, the pupils should present almost no risk to other students at PS 69.

However, Dr. Spielman's statistics on the disease and the difficulty of a carrier transmitting it didn't end the fears of one woman who said: "Remote possibility does not mean nonexistence. We parents are not gamblers in the risk of a child's health."

Paula Golbin, a New Springville resident, asked: "Why can't these children be given home instruction or instruction at Willowbrook if that's their home?"

Dr. Spielman said it might be illegal to force that on the students since a federal law passed last January assures equal access to education for the handicapped.

Some considered his answer insufficient and wondered if the law applied to carriers of disease. "If they're sick,"

one woman said, "they should get out."

John Soldini, district representative of the United Federation of Teachers, said the segregation of the three carriers removes the danger from the other children but not the teacher. He asked that the children be "temporarily removed" from school until a policy could be developed that would also protect teachers.

The revelation of the presence of the carriers came to light after a teacher, who had one of the children in a class, came down last May with type A hepatitis. Kelly, the principal, met with the officials of the Board of Education in an attempt to determine the possible danger to other students and teachers. He was informed that the risk was minimal and that the teacher had a type of hepatitis which is not transmitted by type B carriers.

However, a team of city Health Department physicians recommended the segregation of the children after examining them earlier this week.

When asked last night why he did not reveal the presence of the carriers earlier, Kelly replied: "It is not policy to notify parents about something you can do nothing about. At that time, there was nothing you could do to help."

The Community School Board will be asked to investigate the situation at PS 69 and come to a solution within "two or three" days, Joseph Pancila, a member of the board, said.

An estimated 17 other retarded youngsters, including four from Staten Island, have been identified as hepatitis carriers. They will remain in their classes until city health officials review their cases individually, Dr. Helen Fuelner, director of Special Education for the Board of Education, said earlier this week.

The hepatitis type B controversy had been discussed by Department of Mental Hygiene officials and members of the Willowbrook Review Panel, a spokesman for the panel said yesterday.

The spokesman explained it is the panel's position that no hepatitis type B carrier should be excluded from placement in the community on the basis of that medical distinction.

The segregation of the pupils at PS 69 was viewed as a setback by Cora Hoffman, a spokesman for the Department of Mental Hygiene. She said the state had worked "incredibly hard for years" to get the children in the city school system.

Page 2
of 2