

Willowbrook gets \$100,000 grant for dental care

The award of a \$100,000 federal grant to provide dental services for the mentally retarded at the Willowbrook Developmental Center and Willowbrook's United Cerebral Palsy Unit was announced yesterday by Gov. Carey.

"Tooth decay, the most common dental disease in our society, is a major problem for the severely mentally retarded and those with developmental disabilities," Carey said. "Some of

these children are so badly disabled they may require special facilities or personnel to receive the kinds of dental care other children can obtain from their family dentist."

The grant, provided under the Maternal and Child Health program of Title V, will provide Willowbrook's 1,600 residents and UCP's 620 residents with rehabilitative and restorative dental care services. Historically, the retarded have

received little dental attention.

Carey, in announcing the program, said the demonstration project will attempt to tailor services to individual needs.

The new Office of Mental Retardation and Disabilities in Albany, under the direction of Commissioner Thomas A. Coughlin, will monitor the program, with follow-up services provided by the state Health Department and the

Bureau of Dental Health.

Dr. Murray Ross, chief of dental services at Maimonides Hospital in Brooklyn, will serve as project coordinator.

The typical long-term institutional, mentally retarded person on medication, according to Dr. Ross, needs an average of 25 fillings, one extraction, one gingivectomy, 3.7 gum treatments and one cleaning.

The typical case is of such severity

that general anesthesia and overnight hospitalization is sometimes required.

But Elin M. Howe, Willowbrook's director, who met yesterday with Dr. Ross, said the administration is hoping that some of the dental work can be done under local anesthetic so as to eliminate any risk to the residents.

Ms. Howe also said the Maimonides group would be meeting within the next two weeks with the institution's leader-

ship to draw final guidelines for the program and to determine its starting date.

In addition to treatment for all Willowbrook and UCP residents, the federal grant, Gov. Carey said, will finance training for professional and auxiliary dental personnel and an examination of alternative reimbursement models for future programs like it.

—SYDNEY FREEDBERG