

Willowbrook judgment stand disputed

Your editorial of May 5 conveys a great deal of misinformation regarding the cost of the Willowbrook Judgment. The Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities is able to determine the cost of the judgment at Willowbrook and the 10 related facilities, including the cost of community services. The problem arises in relating these known costs to the amount the system would have cost if there had been no judgment. For example, the staff ratio had to increase, judgment or not. Whether it would have increased to the current levels is an unknown.

As you know, this office has been willing to share information with your paper and will continue to do so in the future. However, if I am asked for a definitive statement on costs, I will have to answer in a more elaborate manner. What I was asked for and gave was my reaction to cost figures developed by your staff. I stated they were reasonable and that I couldn't argue with the gross amount.

I noted that most of the actual articles on the cost of the judgment have alluded to this fact which I pointed out in my 10-minute interviews with the reporter. I, therefore, find it especially annoying that the editorial staff chose to ignore this and base an "opinion piece" on a selected portion of the information at their disposal.

Your editorial did not convey this circumstance. In view of this your characterization of this as a "failure of MH officials to carefully track costs..." leaves a great deal to be desired in terms of objective analyzation of factual information.

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