

Pinto, president of the largest parent group at the Island Center, said the major benefit of increased state spending has been a reduction in Willowbrook population from 5,241 in 1971 to approximately 2,200 residents today.

But according to Pinto, many problems that plagued the center before the 1975 judgment still exist today, "just on a smaller scale."

Pinto said some residents are still mistreated by center employees, adding that the state has failed to hire enough professionals to provide the type of specialized services many handicapped people need.

Felton King, head of the union representing the center's 3,500 employees, agreed that improvements at the 382-acre institution have not been substantial.

"It's improved somewhat in that the overcrowding is no longer in existence and the clients are getting more programming than they were five years ago," said King, president of the Willowbrook chapter of the Civil Service Employees Association.

Although the staff-to-resident ratio at the institution has improved markedly since 1975, King said employees are overburdened with paper work required by the agencies monitoring the center's 31 residential buildings.

King also charged that state salary scales are too low to attract the type of skilled employees needed to work with the mentally retarded.

Katherine Schaninger, executive director of the Willowbrook Review Panel, a court monitor budgeted for \$300,000 a year, said more than limited progress has resulted from the money.

Although she said review panel members are not satisfied with the pace of improvements, she said more residents than ever are provided programs and a chance to live in smaller, more home-like settings.

**Ms. Schaninger also denied charges that Brooklyn Federal Court, which**

**hears the Willowbrook case, has created too many agencies to monitor the level of care being provided the retarded.**

"There is undoubtedly some duplication of efforts, but that does not mean that each monitoring element is not proceeding with its own identified function," she said.

State officials said compiling cost estimates took several months because of the difficulty in separating out expenses not related to the court orders.

Cora Hoffman, spokeswoman for the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, said budget officials had to separate costs of programs that would have been required by federal regulations, not related to court orders.

In addition, she said, a portion of the increased state spending resulted from inflation and had to be deducted from the overall total.

In explaining the difference between the state cost estimate of \$335 million and the Advance figure of \$100 million, Ms. Hoffman said the state had calculated the cumulative cost of the court orders, rather than simply taking the difference between current state allocations and pre-court order budgets.

Following release of the Advance article in May, which for the first time attempted to estimate the cost to taxpayers of the federal court orders, State Sen. John J. Marchi and Assemblywoman Elizabeth Connelly criticized the courts for mandating such a large allocation of state funds.

Coughlin, in an interview from his Albany office, said that overall state funding for the retarded has increased from \$344 million in 1975 to \$418 million this year.

But the actual allocation of state tax-levy funds has been reduced from \$205 million in 1975 to \$198 million this year, he said.

The commissioner, a former director of the Staten Island Developmental Center, attributed the reduction in state spending to efforts by his staff to secure federal money for programs never before funded in New York State.

"There's no question that we have spent a lot of money," Coughlin said. "But I think we have spent what was needed. Some advocates would say it wasn't enough, and some people on the conservative side would say it was too much. I think we struck a reasonable balance."