

Suit says woman abused at drug clinic

By Karen Harris

Staff Writer

The American Civil Liberties Union has filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court seeking \$500,000 for a Cobb County woman who says she was held against her will and abused at a Marietta drug treatment facility known as Straight Inc.

The suit was filed today on behalf of 19-year-old Susan [REDACTED] who says she was the victim of medical malpractice, false imprisonment, fraud and assault during the 11 months she was held in the Florida-based drug rehabilitation program.

The suit also alleges that Straight Inc. is not properly licensed as a drug treatment program in Georgia and that its members are not properly trained to treat drug abusers, said ACLU President Bruce Morris at a press conference.

Dennis Buttimer, director of the Straight facility in Marietta, was not available for comment.

Despite repeated claims that she never used drugs, Ms. [REDACTED] said her parents took her to the facility on Aug. 10, 1982. She said the program's members grilled her about what type of drugs she was on.

"I looked at them, like 'are you crazy?'" Ms. [REDACTED] said during the press conference. She added that she was coerced to sign herself into the program after Straight officials told her she "would never get out" if she didn't cooperate.

She was put on a peanut butter and water diet for nearly a month and once was forced to walk naked in front of a 'foster father' as punishment for her refusal to cooperate with the program, according to the suit.

Several times she bolted for the door in an attempt to escape, but "she was tackled and sat upon," the suit says.

ACLU attorney Kathleen Wilde said the suit is one of many filed across the country against the controversial drug rehabilitation program, which she says violates the fundamental rights of its patients.