

# State Bureau Approves Straight Inc. Drug Program

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The Straight Inc. drug rehabilitation program may end up being a model to which other such programs are compared, said Margie Robertson, executive director of the Cincinnati chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

Earlier this year the ACLU asked the Ohio Bureau of Drug Abuse to investigate Straight because of complaints the ACLU had received from former Straight clients and their families. In a report issued Monday, the Bureau of Drug Abuse found that Straight was a legitimate drug treatment program.

Straight, a private Florida-based organization with centers in Atlanta and Clermont County, tries to rid clients of drug dependencies through the use of peer pressure and family involvement. The center in Clermont County opened in December.

When it called for the investigation in April, the ACLU had received four complaints about the Clermont County operation.

**IN GENERAL,** the complaints said Straight coerced teen-agers into signing themselves into the program, forced them to stay at the center against their will, and employed brainwashing techniques.

The bureau's report has not resolved all of the ACLU's questions about the program, but it has caused the ACLU to review some of the complaints, Mrs. Robertson said.

"Right now I have suspended judgment about it. I think we will now tend to listen with a skeptical ear to both sides of this issue," she said.

The investigation of Straight "has been a good education for us," she said. "Perhaps there are families for which this program has worked."

Ohio does not regulate private drug abuse programs, and if Straight is, as the report says, legitimate and successful, "it might possibly become a model that we could use to gauge the merits of other programs in the future," she said.

**THE ACLU** never considered itself "in particular confrontation with Straight," she said. It merely wanted to investigate the allegations made by some former clients of the program and their families, she said.

Mrs. Robertson said that six other complaints have been received by the ACLU since the Bureau of Drug Abuse made its investigation last month. Those complaints are being evaluated, but the ACLU has not reached the point of even asking Straight about the complaints yet, she said.