

DRUG CENTER DENIES ABUSE ALLEGATIONS

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LAKE WORTH -- Charges that teen-agers have been abused at the private, non- profit Growing Together drug-treatment center are "unwarranted and untrue," center President Warren Blanchard Jr. said on Thursday.

The Lucerne Avenue center held a news conference on Thursday to announce it has achieved coveted accreditation by the national Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations.

That should "lay to rest any concerns" about the center's care, Blanchard said in a statement.

In the spring, a Coral Springs mother alleged that her 15-year-old girl was abused there. A psychiatrist found the girl suffered "post traumatic stress disorder," like some combat war veterans. State officials investigated and are negotiating with the center.

-- SALLY DENEEN

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