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HEADLINE: DRUG TREATMENT CENTER SETTLES RENT SUIT

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BODY:

KIDS of Bergen County Inc., a drug and alcohol treatment center that owed nearly half a million dollars in back rent, will move to a new location as part of an agreement reached with its landlord.

MetPath Inc., a Teterboro company that subleased the Hackensack quarters at 80 Commerce Way to KIDS, agreed to forgive approximately \$ 250,000 in back rent, provided the not-for-profit organization settles elsewhere.

"We continue to try to be patient with them," said Dennis Jilot, a vice president of MetPath, a nationwide laboratory chain based in Teterboro. "We identify with the work they are trying to do."

Meanwhile, the center, whose treatment methods have engendered controversy since its founding in 1984, is paying \$ 25,000 as part of the settlement, an amount \$ 4,250 more than one month's rent.

Telephone Marketing Programs Inc., the advertising agency that guaranteed on KIDS' behalf that the lease would be honored, is contributing \$ 190,000 toward paying MetPath, said Bob Moss, finance and administration director for KIDS.

The settlement resolves a lawsuit filed last year by MetPath after KIDS fell months behind in rent payments. As part of the agreement, KIDS

will relocate. The private program wants to buy a building in Hackensack, Moss said.

"We need to get out of here as soon as we can," Moss said. "We have an amicable settlement; they're not going to throw us out on the street.

But we're under an obligation to work as hard as we can to vacate the premises."

Until KIDS moves, MetPath will rent the building to the program at a reduced rate, Jilot said. He would not disclose the amount of the rent reduction.

KIDS has said that heating and air conditioning in the building proved to be more expensive than anticipated, and the competition for clients in the region greater than expected.

In a separate development, KIDS announced that the board of directors approved a name change: KIDS of Bergen County will now be known as KIDS of North Jersey.

"If you look at a census of the people we have here, you'll see we have people from all over the state, as well as from other areas," Moss said. "We tried to come up with a name that more closely reflects the regional nature of our facility."

The program now treats approximately 130 clients, of whom more than half are from New Jersey. Approximately 35 are from Canada, where KIDS plans to open an affiliated center this year.

KIDS, headed by author and medical anthropologist **Miller Newton**, treats children and young adults suffering from drug and alcohol abuse, eating disorders, and other compulsive behavior problems.

KIDS of North Jersey is one of several programs launched by KIDS Centers of America, of which Newton is president and clinical director.

KIDS of El Paso County in Texas went bankrupt last year, and KIDS Centers closed KIDS of Southern California.

KIDS of Greater Salt Lake is operating in Utah, where its clients have included transfers from the El Paso program. KIDS of the Canadian West is slated to open in Calgary, Alberta, this year.

All of the affiliated centers, including KIDS in Hackensack, faced allegations that clients in the program were mistreated. Newton has consistently said these accusations are groundless.

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