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U.S. drug abuse program pulls out of Edmonton

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EDMONTON (CP) - A U.S.-based **drug** abuse program has been forced to pull out of Edmonton less than six months after it ventured into Canada with high hopes of aiding addicted teens.

The program, **Straight** Inc., wouldn't be able to compete with Premier Don Getty's proposed \$200-million **drug** abuse foundation, said Linda Hedden, vice-president of resource development for **Straight**.

Ironically, Getty's wife Margaret was an honorary local co-chairman of **Straight**.

The Edmonton branch, **Straight's** first attempt at expanding outside the United States, closed last week. "We did not want to be in the position of competing with the government's efforts," Hedden said from the non-profit organization's head office in St. Petersburg, Fla.

In February's provincial throne speech, the Getty government promised to set up a foundation that would fund the prevention, research and treatment of **drug** and alcohol addictions.

Straight's hard-line tactics have been considered controversial by some parents, but the program claims it has a 62 per cent success rate.

The two Edmonton-area teens who enrolled in the **Straight** program are in treatment in the U.S. and will do their follow-up counselling with Alcoholics Anonymous when they return home, said Hedden.

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