

## DRUG TREATMENT CENTER FOR YOUTHS TO CLOSE

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The Rotary Adolescent Drug Treatment Center will close in May due to a lack of patients, officials said.

“We simply didn’t have enough clients,” said Cathy Pasour, the center’s clinical supervisor. “When the center opened, they expected to be overwhelmed with patients in a matter of months. But that just never happened.”

The center has not had a new client in two months, Pasour said. Two potential clients were referred to other programs last week in anticipation of the closing announcement.

The Rotary Adolescent Drug Treatment Center accepts patients 12 to 19 years old who spend six to eight months in an out-patient program. The clients must be at the center 8:30 a.m. to 9 p.m., but they stay with host families nights and weekends. The hosts are families who have had a child complete the program, Pasour said.

The amount of family commitment needed may have contributed to the program’s failure to attract more patients, said Lonnie Waggoner, secretary-treasurer of the board of directors.

“It may have been that this program is way ahead of its time for this area,” Waggoner said. “People with drug problems are looking for a quick, easy fix. They’ll enroll in residential programs that last two months, or even as little as six to 10 weeks.

“But the bottom line of a drug treatment program is not convenience, but results,” he said. “We get results.”

Also, Pasour said, insurance reimbursements may have contributed to the center’s lack of clients.

“Some insurance programs won’t pay as much for an outpatient program as a residential program,” she said. “Even though we cost less, a family may end up paying less out-of-pocket costs.”

Waggoner said the center’s board of directors realized it had financial difficulties about 18 months ago. Increased gifts from Rotary Clubs allowed them to continue until now.

“We’ve never been in a position where patient fees have covered our operating expenses,” Waggoner said. “But until last month, we had the money available to supplement the fees we collected.”

The drug treatment center was chartered in 1985 and accepted its first patients in June 1986 with \$500,000 raised through local Rotary Clubs.

In addition to supplementing the center’s monthly operating costs, the \$500,000 was used to award financial aid to youths unable to pay the \$7,200 per person treatment fee, Waggoner said.

The center, which costs about \$10,000 a month to operate, has treated 53 youths. Fourteen graduated from the program during its nearly three years of operation.

“I’d say well over half of those patients received some financial aid,” Waggoner said. “The logic behind that was a satisfied customer would bring more customers. But that didn’t work.”

Waggoner said the center borrowed \$4,000 to pay expenses due March 15. The center will need between \$25,000 and \$30,000 to meet operating expenses until May.

``We made the decision to allow the patients enrolled to finish the program,`` Waggoner said. ``But frankly, at this point, I don`t know where the money will come from.``

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