

FOCUS - 2 of 12 DOCUMENTS

The Washington Post

August 24, 1982, Tuesday, Final Edition

'Straight' Drug-Treatment Program Is Recommended for **Fairfax** Branch

BYLINE: By Molly Moore, Washington Post Staff Writer

SECTION: Metro; C2

LENGTH: 555 words

The **Fairfax** County Health Care Advisory Board last night recommended permitting Straight Inc., a youth drug-treatment program, to open a branch in the county, but expressed concern over the program's proposed medical, recreational and nutritional plans for its clients.

The advisory board, which reviews all applications for health facilities, cited a critical shortage of drug-treatment programs for youths in making its recommendation to county planners and the **Fairfax** Board of Supervisors.

Straight Inc., based in St. Petersburg, Fla., operates centers in four cities. Its program has been praised loudly by parents whose children have been weaned from drug abuse, and criticized by other parents who say the treatment methods are too intense.

The Straight program accepts youngsters aged 12 to 21 with drug and alcohol abuse problems. The program operates with seven phases during which clients advance based on attitude changes. They are closely watched during the first three phases.

Board members were especially concerned with treatment during those initial stages of the program. "I'm very concerned about the rights of the individuals," said board member Mary Grace Lintz. "You are in a sense taking that child and locking him up."

Ted Prophett, a parent of a youth treated in the program, said Straight is "tough for the kids initially," but the long counseling sessions and peer pressure used by the program eventually help draw the youths out of their drug-related life style.

Board members questioned the program's practice of accepting youngsters' word about drug use rather than performing medical screening tests, the adequacy of the training given the program's paraprofessionals, the adequacy of recreation in the early stages of treatment when youths are kept mostly inside a building for long counseling sessions and whether meal plans are adequate.

The proposed Straight center in **Fairfax** County would be open to youngsters from throughout the metropolitan area and charge clients \$4,000 to participate, almost double the fee charged in the four cities where it already operates. Prophett said the higher fees are necessary because of higher rents and salaries in this area.

The local organizers for Straight Inc. say they need about \$450,000 to launch the program and have been soliciting private donations since February. Once the program opens, it is funded primarily through client fees; the program's representatives say it uses no government funds.

'Straight' Drug-Treatment Program Is Recommended for Fairfax Branch The Washington Post August 24, 1982,
Tuesday, Final Edition

Three parents whose children are now in the St. Petersburg facility presented Straight Inc.'s application to the board, which criticized Straight for not sending program officials. "Some of our questions could have been better addressed by someone with more training," said Bill Carter, one board member.

But board members said they were impressed with the accounts of the parents, who described their personal successes with the program.

Prophett said Straight Inc. proposes to open the **Fairfax** facility in October and is considering renting a warehouse at 5515 Backlick Rd. in the Shirley industrial complex.

About 140 youths from the Washington area who are now enrolled in the St. Petersburg program would be transferred to **Fairfax** County in October. Enrollment would be expanded to 250 over the next two years, Prophett said.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

Copyright 1982 The Washington Post