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County Health Board Asks Study of 'Straight' Program**BYLINE:** By MOLLY MOORE, Washington Post Staff Writer**SECTION:** Virginia Weekly; Va. 9**LENGTH:** 645 words

The **Fairfax** County Health Care Advisory Board has asked county officials to examine the medical, recreational and nutritional services of Straight Inc., a youth drug-treatment program.

Although the health board, which reviews all applications for health facilities, last week recommended that the program be allowed to operate in the county, it expressed serious concerns about some aspects of the program.

Straight Inc. is a Florida-based drug treatment program. It now operates in four cities and has been the subject of controversy in at least two of those cities. Parents whose children have been helped by the program praise its success, while critics say the program is too demanding physically and mentally.

In a written memorandum to the county Board of Supervisors, which will make the final decision on the Straight application, the health board outlined several concerns, based on information gathered at a public hearing last month on the Straight program.

One concern of the health board focuses on Straight's apparent lack of certain screening procedures for youngsters just coming into the program.

"The Straight program does not perform these routine drug and psychiatric screenings upon admission," the advisory board said in a memo outlining its findings. "Although during treatment clients are carefully watched . . ."

The board also told the supervisors that the "possible lack of recreational and nutritional attention . . . should be noted."

At the hearing before the health group last month, board members questioned whether the program provides enough recreation or sufficient meals for the teen-agers who would be in the program.

The board also told the supervisors, "The Straight program from many accounts appears to be effective, but only for a relative few. It will not be a countywide solution to drug abuse problems. "

The panel determined that the strong family commitment demanded for each youngster in the program would eliminate some clients who could benefit from the program.

"This level of commitment is just not possible for all," the advisory board memo said. "Thus the population of eligible clients is necessarily limited."

Straight has proposed opening its Washington-area program in a warehouse at 5515 Backlick Rd. in the Shirley industrial complex, which Straight representatives say would require about \$80,000 in renovations. The county

Planning Commission will conduct a hearing on the zoning application at 8:15 p.m. tomorrow in the board room of the Massey Building.

Straight officials have said they hope to enroll 140 youngsters in the Washington-area program initially, and expand to about 250 in the next two years. Each client would be charged \$4,000 to participate in the program, which Straight officials have said takes an average of nine months to complete. The program will accept clients ages 12 to 21, representatives said.

About 140 Washington-area youths are now enrolled in the St. Petersburg Straight program, Straight representatives said. Those clients would be transferred to the Washington chapter. The clients would attend about 12 hours of intensive counseling and discussion sessions at the Straight building during the day and would return to their homes at night, program representatives said.

A few out-of-town youngsters would be accepted into the Washington program, Straight officials said, and those clients would be housed at night by area families with children in the program.

Three parents of youngsters enrolled in the St. Petersburg Straight chapter represented the program at the hearing before the Health Care Advisory Board.

The board said in its memo to the supervisors, "It would have been helpful, however, if a Straight Inc. professional staff representative had been present to address the more technical questions concerning treatment modalities."

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