

## DRUG CENTER REQUEST DENIED

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The state mental health department will not rescind its notice to deny renewal licenses to a Northern Virginia adolescent drug rehabilitation center. The center, Straight Inc., in Springfield, plans to appeal the department's decision, said Joy C. Margolis, speaking for Straight Inc.'s corporate office in St. Petersburg, Fla.

The rehabilitation center was notified of the mental health department's intent in a March 8 letter from Assistant Commissioner Jacqueline M. Ennis.

The letter was released to The Times-Dispatch yesterday after the newspaper filed a Freedom of Information Act request.

Ms. Ennis' letter cited complaints and violations, noting that "the department finds that the (corrective action plan proposed by the center) does not provide satisfactory assurance that the regulatory non-compliances cited in the past will not re-occur."

Straight has until March 21 to request a formal hearing, or shut down. Until it exhausts the appeals process, it can continue to operate.

The state Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services notified the Springfield center Jan. 29 that it would not renew the center's license and that the program must close.

As a first step in the appeals process, Straight asked for an informal conference. That occurred last month and prompted Ms. Ennis' letter outlining the department's rejection of Straight's corrective action plan.

During the hearing, it was learned that Straight was cited for 76 licensing violations. The center had been operating under a court agreement issued last year after Washington-area parents complained about Straight's treatment policies.

The licensing violations cited by the department ranged from Straight's failure to list clients' middle names on registration forms to not having medically trained staff members on duty at all times, to not sending clients to school.

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