

Drug-treatment program under HRS scrutiny for mistreatment

[CITY Edition]

St. Petersburg Times - St. Petersburg, Fla.
Date: Dec 12, 1991
Start Page: 4.B
Section: TAMPA BAY AND STATE
Text Word Count: 319

Document Text

The state has "a litany of concerns" about Straight Inc., a drug-treatment program for teen-agers, according to a health official.

But Straight's program administrator, Michael Scaletta, says the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS) is harassing the private, non-profit program.

Straight, now operating under a temporary license, is being scrutinized for allegations of mistreatment and mismanagement and has been plagued by such allegations for several years.

Founded 13 years ago in St. Petersburg, the nationwide program uses confrontational rap sessions and peer-pressure therapy to try to free adolescents from drug dependency. It operates Central Florida's largest private residential drug treatment program.

HRS contends that Straight has kept incomplete records of treatment plans, failed to notify the agency of incidents in which clients were harmed, used inappropriate restraints on clients and has no policy for dealing with those who appear suicidal.

Scaletta said Tuesday the latest allegations are too broad.

"We say we have a policy that handles all types of issues. I say we're in compliance. I'm just so upset by this. It's harassment," Scaletta said.

Paul Snead, who oversees the HRS Central Florida district, denied that the agency has a vendetta against the program.

"There are kids in that program whose parents are at their last wits," Snead said. "I'm trying to do everything I can to keep that program afloat. It serves a purpose, but we've just had a litany of concerns about the program."

The HRS will issue a more detailed report when it finishes its investigation, said the agency's Ted Bogert.

"Straight is a tough program and we'll be the first to tell you and the parents who come in that this is not for everybody," he said. "You have to have a commitment to get your child free of drugs."

"Straight has been around a long time and had its share of controversy, but the fact remains that it works."

Credit: Associated Press

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction or distribution is prohibited without permission.

Abstract (Document Summary)

The state has "a litany of concerns" about Straight Inc., a drug-treatment program for teen-agers, according to a health official.

But Straight's program administrator, Michael Scaletta, says the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS) is harassing the private, non-profit program.

Founded 13 years ago in St. Petersburg, the nationwide program uses confrontational rap sessions and peer-pressure therapy to try to free adolescents from drug dependency. It operates Central Florida's largest private residential drug treatment program.

<http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/tampabay/access/50684925.html?FMT...> Drug-treatment program under HRS scrutiny for mistreatment - News...

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction or distribution is prohibited without permission.