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Suit Against Straight Inc. To Be Decided By A Jury

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The question of whether Straight Inc., a Pinellas drug treatment program for teen-agers, is to blame for injuries suffered by a 13-year-old girl who leaped from the fourth story of a Tampa apartment will be left to a jury.

Circuit Judge Michael Athanason Thursday denied motions for summary judgments in favor of Straight and of a parent who was providing a home for the girl

when the incident occurred in June of 1978.

The girl and her parents are suing both the parent and the drug treatment program, claiming they were negligent in caring for the girl. The girl had been enrolled in Straight just two weeks before she jumped from the apartment building. She claims she wanted to go back to her family but that she was not allowed to do so. Instead, Straight sent her to live in the apartment with another Straight client and the client's father.

The girl was injured in the fall. She spent weeks in a hospital where doctors inserted steel rods in her spine, then months in a body cast and a brace. She may require

more operations and claims she is in continuous pain.

However, attorneys for Straight and the parent in whose apartment the girl was living deny any responsibility in the girl's injuries. Straight has countersued the State Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS), saying that if the drug treatment program is found negligent, HRS is also responsible. HRS licensed and monitors the program. Straight also claims that HRS indicated at the time the girl was admitted to Straight that there was a court order saying she should be enrolled.