

Woman settles suit with drug treatment program

CLEARWATER. (UPI) —

Straight Inc., a St. Petersburg-based drug treatment program, has agreed to a \$37,500 settlement with a Hillsborough County woman who filed a lawsuit claiming she had been held in the program against her will.

Jacqueline A. [REDACTED] filed suit in Pinellas County Circuit Court in October 1983, claiming she was held against her will and was abused emotionally and physically.

She said she was enrolled in Straight in February 1983, and stayed for one month. Her parents were required to withdraw her from the program the following month because they didn't participate in the program's rigorous family therapy.

According to her suit, the then 18-year-old woman re-enrolled in May 1983, but when she later tried to withdraw, was kept against her will.

The suit contended she was subjected to repeated verbal and physical assaults and when she tried to run away during a group meeting, she was thrown to the ground and sat upon for 10 hours by a group of staff members and other clients. She was released later that day.

The settlement was reached Friday and became public Monday.

Both [REDACTED] and William D. Oliver, executive director of Straight, said they were pleased with the settlement.

Oliver said Straight agreed to the settlement on advice of its attorneys.

"People settle lawsuits all the time," he said. "I don't think there's any message either way."

[REDACTED] said she no longer drinks or takes drugs and said she is thinking of using part of the money to enroll in Hillsborough Community College.