

2nd Straight drug center ci

By ANNE BARTLETT
Tribune Staff Writer

ORLANDO — The state has given a second Straight Inc. drug rehabilitation center a license for only three months rather than a year because of its methods of restraining patients and other concerns.

The criticism of the Orlando center is similar to that by the state Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services' of the organization's Pinellas Park facility, which last week received a three-month license renewal.

HRS issued a report on both centers, following routine inspections. HRS typically renews the licenses of drug and alcohol re-

habilitation programs for one year.

The Orlando report also praises the dedication of the staff and adult volunteers. Employees "appear to be committed to helping clients succeed and gain the maximum benefit from the program," it states. Straight has 30 days to respond.

Linda Hedden, Straight's vice president for resource development, declined comment on the Orlando report Thursday because program officials have not read it.

However, Straight officials have said the HRS report on the Pinellas Park center is a naive swipe at a program that the state doesn't really understand.

Straight is a 13-year-old drug and alco-

hol rehabilitation program for young people ages 13 to 21. It uses intense peer pressure and counseling methods similar to Alcoholics Anonymous.

The controversial program has about 1,000 clients in centers in nine cities.

President Bush called the program "inspiring" when he visited Pinellas Park in March 1987 and former first lady Nancy Reagan praised it as well.

Critics contend the program brainwashes and physically abuses patients. At least five lawsuits have been filed against the organization. At least two have been settled.

It was founded by Mel Sembler, a Trea-

Drug center criticized

year.
uses the ded-
volunteers.
committed to
the maxi-
," it states.
the president
lined com-
nursday be-
not read it.
have said the
center is a
the state
ing and alco-

hol rehabilitation program for young people ages 13 to 21. It uses intense peer pressure and counseling methods similar to Alcoholics Anonymous.

The controversial program has about 1,000 clients in centers in nine cities.

President Bush called the program "inspiring" when he visited Pinellas Park in March 1987 and former first lady Nancy Reagan praised it as well.

Critics contend the program brainwashes and physically abuses patients. At least five lawsuits have been filed against the organization. At least two have been settled.

It was founded by Mel Sembler, a Trea-

sure Island developer who has been nominated U.S. ambassador to Australia by President Bush. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee this week delayed action on Sembler's nomination after Sen. Paul Sarbanes, D-Md., questioned the qualifications of Sembler and three other nominees.

Sembler said last week that he didn't view the Pinellas Park report as a problem. "I don't worry too much about it," he said. "It's the best program in the United States."

The HRS report on the Orlando center, based on an inspection from May 31 to

See HRS, Page 6B

HRS report criticizes restraining methods

■ From Page 1B

June 2, criticizes Straight's methods of restraining and monitoring patients and what it calls inconsistent record keeping.

"The program's policy on the restraint is a potential problem, both from a liability and clients' rights standpoint, with the possibility of serious injury when clients are encouraged and/or allowed to physically restrain other clients," the report states.

It does not cite examples, but recommends that the policy be rewritten and more detailed. Only staff members should be permitted to restrain patients, the report states.

It adds that patients "should be allowed to shower and toilet in privacy" and states that chaperones of those in the program's first phase "can remain outside the door."

The report also states that personnel records showed only one

staff member had undergone training in the past year. HRS requires that all personnel receive a minimum of 16 hours of training a year, and that the training be documented in the employees' file.

HRS officials also noted there was no documentation in files that the treatment staff were certified to administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation — another HRS requirement. Two staff member's files contained CPR certification that had expired.

Some personnel files also failed to contain up-to-date job descriptions and there was no evidence in client records that clients had signed their treatment plans, another HRS requirement.

During patient interviews, HRS investigators found that some were unsure who their primary counselor was. "It is apparent that individual counseling is at a bare minimum," the report states.

High staff turnover has affected the program's stability, it contends.