

Citations corrected, Orlando drug center says

By PHIL WILLON
Tribune Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — A Straight Inc. drug treatment center in Orlando has corrected a laundry-list of citations handed down by the state in June, according to a report the facility filed Tuesday.

After a routine visit in June, an inspection team from the state Department of Rehabilitative Services (HRS) criticized the Orlando center for methods used to restrain and monitor patients and for inconsistent record keeping.

HRS officials found similar problems at a Straight treatment center in Pinellas Park, according to an HRS site visit report also re-

leased in June. Straight Inc. officials from that facility filed a written response last week stating that they were correcting the problems.

Paul Peary, Straight's corporate vice president of operations, last week called HRS "naïve" about drug and alcohol treatment and said the problems found were petty. Straight Inc. officials in Orlando were not available for comment about the report released Tuesday.

Straight's treatment program uses peer pressure and counseling methods similar to Alcoholics Anonymous to treat 12- to 21-year-olds for alcohol and drug abuse. The non-profit organization is based in St. Petersburg and has about 1,000

clients in its nationwide centers.

Paul Snead, HRS district administrator for Orange, Osceola, Seminole and Brevard counties, said the Orlando facility has cooperated fully with him and his staff and soon will be reinspected.

"At this point, things look pretty good," Snead said. "We'll do a site visit in a week or so, so we can bounce what they're saying off what we really see."

The Orlando center's operating license was renewed for only three months after the HRS inspection, instead of the standard one year granted to most other treatment fa-

cilities. After the second inspection, it will be eligible for an extended license, Snead said.

Straight's policy involving the use of restraints, and methods used to overpower out-of-control clients, will be reviewed again during the visit, Snead said. The HRS report accused Straight of "encouraging and/or allowing" patients to subdue and restrain other patients, a practice HRS said can lead to serious injury.

Straight Inc. officials have said in the past that only in cases of self defense do patients restrain other patients.