

Father: Son mistreated at rehab center

Man alleges sleep deprivation, isolation

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INDIANAPOLIS (WISH) - I-Team 8 has learned a formal complaint has been filed with the state attorney general against an Indianapolis teen rehab center. At issue: a father who claims his son is being mistreated inside Pathway Family Center in Castleton.

In his complaint, Mark West states what happened to his 17-year-old son inside Pathway has him "gravely concerned for his son's welfare both physically and emotionally."

What West calls isolation, other parents call lifesaving for their drug-addicted teenagers. Pathway allowed 24-Hour News 8 inside the facility and provided a group of parents for I-Team 8 to speak with.

The complaint, filed late Friday afternoon with the Indiana Attorney General's Office, alleges "substandard housing and care" including kids sleeping in locked rooms with windows bolted shut and no lights. One allegation is that at least one 17-year-old missed a complete year of school.

The complaint goes on to allege continual sleep deprivation and isolation. It alleges kids are not allowed privacy at any time and that other kids who've been in the program longer are then assigned to go with them while bathing or using the bathroom.

The complaint also says kids are cut off from family, no phone calls or letters allowed, so there is no way to address grievances or mistreatment.

Two other Pathway facilities have closed in recent months in Detroit and Cincinnati, Ohio amid protests from parents and former students. But director Terri Nissley said they closed due to the bad economy and that the Pathway program is being confused with another program that was shut down two years ago in Ohio.

"There were people treated at Kids Helping Kids years ago, disgruntled and they were the protestors. We don't claim them," said Nissley.

Parents and kids tell I-Team 8 they do receive schooling, at the very least over the Internet. They also said that kids are not allowed to touch other kids.

Looking through state contracts, I-Team 8 has found the company just signed an agreement with the state of Indiana to counsel kids through juvenile probation and the courts.

One of four kids Pathway allowed us to speak with broke down into tears, saying she owes her life to the program.