

Teen's parents settle abuse case

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GONZALES — The parents of a Prairieville teenager who allege he suffered abuse and related temporary kidney failure at a Louisiana National Guard Youth Challenge facility last year have reached a \$95,000 out-of-court settlement with the state of Louisiana, the teen's attorney said.

Now 17 and recovered after being hospitalized for weeks, Bradley Millet was put in a small cubicle in a building called "the hole" at Youth Challenge's Camp Minden in north Louisiana, plaintiff's attorney Keith Crawford said.

Apparently dehydrated but kept on limited fluids, Millet was left in his own vomit, excrement and urine for extended periods during three days in August 2008 before his parents were called, Crawford said. They immediately sought medical help, he said.

Youth Challenge Camp officials had accused Millet of faking illness to avoid exercise and denied him medical assistance initially, Crawford said.

Judge Guy Holdridge of the 23rd Judicial District Court signed an order Sept. 3 accepting the settlement between Millet's parents and the Louisiana Office of Risk Management, according to court records in Ascension Parish.

The state made no admission of fault in the settlement.

State Risk Director J.S. "Bud" Thompson Jr., who heads the Office of Risk Management, said Friday he was not immediately able to comment on the incident.

Guard spokesman Lt. Col. Michael Kazmierzak declined to comment on the case earlier this month, saying it was still ongoing.

According to Louisiana law, a judge must approve settlement of a minor's legal claim. The agreement headed off a potential lawsuit, according to attorneys' correspondence.

The 23rd JDC encompasses Ascension, Assumption and St. James parishes.

A petition for authority to settle the claim filed Sept. 1 with the Ascension Parish Clerk of Court says Millet's kidneys temporarily failed and that he needed several rounds of dialysis.

The petition also alleges Millet suffered from rhabdomyolysis, a condition in which muscle breaks down due to injury or strain and which can damage the kidneys.

Millet, then 16, had volunteered to participate in the youth program aimed at helping troubled teens get back on track. Youth Challenge offers a 22-week residential phase in a quasi-military environment, its Web site says.

Crawford said his client had minor disciplinary problems in school but that he was not required to enter the Youth Challenge program.

Millet had just started the residential phase at Camp Minden when the alleged abuse occurred, Crawford said.

He said Millet was put in the hole because he could not perform strenuous exercises to officials' standards.

Millet had a medical restriction because of a pre-existing injury to his arm that was supposed to keep him from doing push-ups, Crawford said, but Millet was required to do them.

The petition does not actually say where Millet's alleged abuse occurred or detail specifics besides his injuries but it says state employees contributed to the abuse.

The petition says Millet suffered severe injuries and medical malpractice Aug. 17, 2008, that resulted in his hospitalization.

Crawford provided copies of two demand letters sent to the Office of Risk Management earlier this year that outlined the allegations as occurring at Camp Minden. In those letters, Crawford sought a \$175,000 settlement and a \$185,000 settlement.

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