

EL PASO DRUG-TREATMENT CENTER ORDERED CLOSED

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EL PASO -- A drug-abuse rehabilitation center closed under a court order Thursday night amid allegations that it had violated the civil rights of its clients.

State District Judge Bob Perkins in Austin ordered KIDS of El Paso County Inc. closed after reviewing the results of a yearlong investigation into the program by the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse. Perkins' temporary restraining order was issued Thursday at the request of the attorney general's office.

A hearing is scheduled for Tuesday in Austin on whether to make the order permanent, said Ron Dusek, spokesman for the attorney general's office.

About 90 clients went home with their parents Thursday night. Jim Cardwell, chairman of the KIDS board of directors, said he doubted that any of the program's successes would carry outside the doors of the rehabilitation center.

"There are going to be drug-using kids on the streets tonight -- a lot of kids," he said.

The Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse revoked the program's license earlier this month, said Bob Dickson, executive director of the state agency. The commission found that KIDS personnel had abused children, that personnel denied clients telephone and mail privileges, that clients were not allowed bathroom privacy and that some clients were put in the care of other clients.

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