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6 Investigates: Roloff Homes under state investigation for treatment program

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By Jessica Savage



Roloff Homes, run by the People's Baptist Church is under state investigation. (KRIS)

CORPUS CHRISTI - Roloff Homes Ministries has a long history of battling state oversight.

A state health spokesperson has confirmed a recent investigation into the evangelical religious center run by the People's Baptist Church, which last made news in 2001 when it voluntarily closed a troubled youth home on its campus just outside Corpus Christi city limits, off FM 665.

An addiction recovery program, known as the Jubilee Ladies Home and Roloff Men's Home - is the focus of a new state investigation to determine if a license is required to run the program. All substance abuse treatment programs in Texas require a state license or registration. 6 Investigates contacted the Texas Department of State Health Services in October after receiving a tip the program might not be properly licensed.

"They currently don't have registration as a faith-based provider, but as I understand it have been fairly receptive to doing that," said Chris Van Deusen, spokesman for the Texas Department of State Health Services.

There is an exemption from the state license, but it only applies to faith-based providers treating adults. Even then, those groups must register with the state. There is no state record of Roloff Homes ever registering the program, which has been operating since the 1950s.

Two weeks ago, the state visited the Roloff campus as a part of its investigation. Peoples Baptist Church Pastor E.S. Mitchell declined to speak on camera, but says he's working with the state to submit the required paperwork. The pastor says he plans to restore the ministries of the late founder Lester Roloff. Those ministries have dwindled over the past decade.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Roloff Homes fought state oversight of its troubled teenage boys and girls homes. In 2001, a jury convicted a supervisor of unlawful restraint of a child. Later that year, the state began requiring a license for all religious youth homes. That led to closure of the Roloff youth homes.

The state has not completed its recent investigation. 6 Investigates will update you once a report is released.