

Rice Lake treatment center won't reopen

The Rice Lake Day Treatment Center will not reopen following its suspension by the state related to the death of 7-year old Angelika Arndt.

Northwest Guidance and Counseling Clinic board president Denison Tucker informed the state of that news in a letter dated Nov. 10. The clinic operated the center.

"The public scrutiny, although understandable, would place the program under an onerous set of public expectations for perfection," Tucker wrote to Department of Health and Family Services director Otis Woods.

"Overall the situation would be stressful and intense for everyone and would place an unreasonable burden on the program staff and your department's staff," wrote Tucker.

The center provided intensive intervention and preventative mental health services for youths.

State spokesperson Eva Robelia said state officials are in the process of replying to Tucker's letter. She said that reply would include the state's requirements

for closing the facility.

Tucker wrote that financial, regulatory, legal and liability issues presented significant obstacles for the corporation to commit to a restart in February.

He wrote that the clinic, which has 12 other sites, had made significant progress toward its goals of reform and enhancement.

The state suspended its funding of the center on Aug. 15, after the May 26 death of Angelika, of Ladysmith.

A client at the center, Angelika was put into a disciplinary control hold on May 25 and lost consciousness. She died the following day.

A subsequent investigation at the center by the state turned up multiple violations. The state directed the clinic to submit a plan of corrections for the violations.

The state rejected the plan as incomplete on July 28. It then issued a notice of a 6-month suspension. An amended plan was submitted to the state on Aug. 7 but was again not accepted.

Concern was expressed in the

See **CLOSED**, Page 2

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Continued from Page 1

state's reply that there was lack of evidence of a commitment to changing the control hold practice.

If at the end of the 6-month suspension the corrections had not been approved and implemented, the state had the authority to revoke the center's certificate.

The Hennepin County medical examiner in Minneapolis ruled Angelika's death was a homicide caused by "complications of chest compression asphyxiation" leading to "cardiopulmonary arrest while restrained by another person."

The medical definition of homicide is death caused by another person. The case remains under investigation by the Barron County District Attorney's Office and the state Justice Department.