

Tragic Deaths Reveal Shocking Pattern of Abuse in Troubled Teen Industry

The troubled teen treatment industry is filled with abuse, evident by recent cases of severe harm and even loss of life. CCHR demands action to end the abuse.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- In light of two tragic incidents at troubled teen treatment facilities, where two young girls lost their lives due to alleged abuse and negligence, there is an urgent need to address and eradicate the alarming mistreatment and harm teens are subjected to. [Citizens Commission on Human Rights International](#) (CCHR), a leading mental health industry watchdog, says these heartbreaking stories underscore the need to [put an end to this abuse](#) and protect the rights and safety of children.



CCHR is calling upon legislators and government agencies to take decisive action. The troubled teen behavioral/psychiatric facilities must be subject to rigorous regulations and oversight to ensure safety and accountability.

The troubled teen industry is a network of private youth programs, including psychiatric-behavioral residential treatment centers and boarding schools, wilderness programs, and drug rehabilitation centers that promise to help struggling youths.[1] However, abuse within these facilities is a deeply concerning issue that has demanded action for years. Far too often, there have been reports of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, as well as neglect, leading to severe harm and even loss of life.

A recent devastating incident was exposed by The Salt Lake Tribune on June 9, 2023. It told of the heart-wrenching death of a 14-year-old girl at a residential treatment center in Utah in January 2022. The Tribune reported that staff failed to provide adequate medical care and ensure the safety of the girl, despite her worsening symptoms and her mother's requests that she be taken to a doctor. While the cause of death has not been publicly disclosed, her parents allege their daughter had been vomiting, complained of heartburn, and had diarrhea. They also claim that sometime during the night, she got out of bed and fell in the hallway near the bathroom. She moaned while on the floor, and didn't respond when a staffer told her to be quiet so she

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wouldn't disturb the other girls. Tragically, she lay dying in the hallway, alone, while a staff member who was supposed to check on the residents had fallen asleep in another room. A staff member who arrived the next morning found her unresponsive and called 911. She died at a hospital later that morning.[2]

In December 2022, another tragic incident occurred at a behavioral boarding school in Utah, claiming the life of a 17-year-old girl. Her death resulted from an infection that is typically considered “easily treated.” Despite experiencing symptoms for several days, the staff at the

center allegedly denied the girl medical attention, leading to her death. Her family alleges that the staff callously ignored her pleas for help and dismissed her condition as feigned.[3]

Despite these two tragic deaths and accusations of neglecting the girls' medical needs, Utah regulators have allowed both facilities to continue operating. Both institutions are under “conditional” status per the Office of Licensing's website, which generally means they are required to give extra weekly reports or ensure that their residents are receiving prompt medical care.[4] CCHR says this is grossly insufficient.

Paris Hilton, a renowned businesswoman, media personality, and philanthropist, has been outspoken about this issue after enduring traumatic experiences at Provo Canyon behavioral residential center as a teenager. In her 2020 documentary, *This Is Paris*, she courageously revealed her story, which echoed those of countless others, highlighting the urgent need for systemic change and stricter regulations within the troubled teen treatment industry.

Along with the #BreakingCodeSilence movement, Hilton has powerfully exposed this type of behavioral facility abuse of teens and demanded reforms. She testified before Utah and Oregon legislatures in 2021 in support of bills now passed that protect children and teens, especially from lethal restraint use in behavioral facilities.

Hilton has also gone to Capitol Hill advocating for the passage of the [Stop Institutional Child Abuse Act](#), a critical legislative proposal, that seeks to address the pervasive problem. The proposed bill advocates for rigorous oversight of the industry to ensure the safety and well-being of children.

CCHR says the Stop Institutional Child Abuse Act is a vital step toward safeguarding children and adolescents from the horrors of abuse within the behavioral treatment industry. By passing this legislation, lawmakers can send a clear message that psychiatric mistreatment of youths will not be tolerated.

"It is not only heartbreaking but also outrageous to hear of yet two more lives lost due to negligence and mistreatment in the troubled teen behavioral treatment industry," says Jan Eastgate, president of CCHR International. "These devastating incidents highlight the immediate need for systemic change and stronger protections for vulnerable youth. We call upon lawmakers and industry leaders to prioritize implementing those protections, which must include stronger criminal and civil penalties against facilities and mental health practitioners responsible for the ill-treatment and the deaths of children and teens in their care. Action is needed now—not later—to put an end to the ongoing pervasive abuse and neglect that these behavioral facilities foster."

CCHR is calling upon legislators and government agencies to take decisive action. The troubled teen behavioral/psychiatric facilities must be subject to rigorous regulations and oversight to ensure safety and accountability. Existing laws and regulations governing these facilities should be strengthened to enforce accountability in order to prevent future abuse and deaths.

[1] Cathy Krebs, "Five Facts About the Troubled Teen Industry," American Bar Association, 22 Oct. 2021, <https://www.americanbar.org/groups/litigation/committees/childrens-rights/practice/2021/5-facts-about-the-troubled-teen-industry/>

[2] Jessica Miller, "A girl died at Maple Lake Academy after vomiting for days. Now, her parents are suing," The Salt Lake Tribune, 9 June 2023, <https://www.sltrib.com/news/2023/06/09/girl-died-maple-lake-academy-after/>

[3] Jessica Miller, The Salt Lake Tribune, 9 June 2023

[4] Jessica Miller, The Salt Lake Tribune, 9 June 2023

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