

Three state school inmates overdose Parents blame school officials for child's poor health and hospitalization

HOUSTON (AP) — Three Crockett State School inmates have overdosed on psychotropic drugs, with a teen-ager who had reported abuse at the facility still hospitalized Wednesday.

Jason Scott Kay was on life support at John Sealy Hospital in Galveston. The 17-year-old had in September mailed his mother a photograph taken of him following an alleged beating at the hands of other school inmates.

Texas Youth Commission officials were unsure how Kay and the others had acquired the medications, which are commonly dispensed at the Crockett school, before overdosing on Sunday.

The victims were taken to the Galveston hospital after school officials discovered them having physical problems about 3:30 a.m., commission spokeswoman Pamela Ward told the Houston Chronicle.

Kay of New Caney required a ventilator to assist his breathing, said his stepfather, Joe Glover.

None of the victims had been prescribed the medications, which can cause respiratory and cardiac problems leading to deep coma if overdosed, said Ward.

"The staff noticed one kid kind of falling out of bed and vomiting," she said. "They took him to

see the nurse in the infirmary."

The other two inmates, age 16 and 20 years, have since been returned to the school 115 miles north of Houston. An investigation is under way to determine how the inmates got the drugs they consumed, said Ward, along with a review of complaints about Kay's beating.

"It ain't right. The boy is on life support, laying in the bed with his ankle cuffed."

— Joe Glover
stepfather of overdose victim

The tablets acquired by the inmates — Depakote and Tegretol — are commonly used to treat patients with seizures. The school administers the drug to inmates suffering from emotional problems such as bipolar disorder.

"They can't keep stuff like this away from those

boys? And now this happens?" said Glover of New Caney. "It ain't right. The boy is on life support, laying in the bed with his ankle cuffed."

Ward said searches using drug-sniffing dogs have tried to ensure other inmates did not have the drugs.

Glover and Kay's mother, Donna Glover, said they had not seen the boy in more than a year, since he was placed in Crockett for a second time in September 1999. They complained that school officials have stonewalled them about Kay, who has been serving his second term for problems including running away from home and curfew violations.

"He was supposed to have gotten out," said Glover, who added that his stepson told him officials do not prevent fighting at the school. "But because of the fight incident, they postponed it. Now, he has overdosed. It's just not right. The boys get no supervision. How can somebody get beat up and nobody will stop it?"

Two Crockett officers in 1997 were cleared of wrongdoing after one of their disruptive inmates died of asphyxiation while being restrained. The 17-year-old boy's death apparently was the first in TYC history.

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MEDINA

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Association, Pack said LMP has the resources to conduct a more effective awareness campaign. At a table at Rudder Fountain this week, members of LMP are distributing fliers alerting students to the overlooked dangers of drowsy driving. Students were given the opportunity to sign a pledge banner promising never to get behind the wheel when sleepy.

A toll-free number will be available soon allowing students to find out which hotels offer discounts, Pack said.

The Lupe Medina Program was named after Lupe Medina, an A&M student killed in a car accident April 23, 1998, after he fell asleep at the wheel while driving to College Station from Huntsville. The next fall, the Student Senate started the program.

Rob Ferguson, a senior political science major who introduced the measure in the Student Senate, said the program has taken strides to educate students about the harms of mixing sleep deprivation and driving.

"Drowsy driving was not something people knew much about, but now, the name Lupe Medina has become partnered with drowsy driving, and that's good, because it means people are becoming more aware," said Ferguson, executive vice president for policy and administration in the Student Senate.

The key to raising student awareness, Ferguson said, is to puncture students' sense of invincibility.

"Sleep is very undervalued, and students think they are invincible. When you push yourself to the limit, it will catch up with you," he said. "We've seen what can happen when a student tries to make that long drive home after the game with just a few hours of sleep," he said.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, drowsy driving is responsible for at least 100,000 accidents and 1,500 fatalities, and 20 is the peak age for drowsy driving crashes.

Excessive rainfall responsible for flooding and evacuations

ABILENE (AP) — West Texas flood waters were receding Wednesday after heavy thunderstorms dumped more than six inches of rain in an hour, flooding businesses, homes and cars.

Some residents who could not return to their homes because of high water stayed at Red Cross shelters overnight.

Weather forecasts called for more rain through Wednesday afternoon.

On Tuesday, two lines of thunderstorms that converged on Abilene before stalling — one out of the west and another from the south — dumped rain so quickly that rooftop drainage and storm sewer systems could not keep up, turning intersections into swimming pools and flooding buildings.

Dozens of motorists were rescued from flooded houses and automobiles.

The storms provided some help for Abilene's long-running drought, replenishing the city's shrunken wa-

ter source, Lake Fort Phantom Hill. But it was not enough to lift water consumption restrictions.

"The Lord is giving, so I'm not going to say a thing about it," Randy Scott, coordinator of the G.V. Daniels Recreation Center, told the Abilene Reporter-News in Wednesday's editions.

"It all comes on God's time, and I guess today was the day," Scott said at one of two emergency shelters designated by the city for those in need of flood relief.

The American Red Cross had set up emergency shelters for those whose homes were flooded, or who could not get to their homes due to flooded streets. Several inches of water swept into houses on Abilene's north side.

At one intersection, three people were rescued from a city bus that stalled on a railroad underpass, and quickly filled with several feet of water.

"Now, you can't even see the bus;

it's under water," said Larry Bell, fire battalion chief.

No serious injuries were reported.

A police department dispatcher who declined to give her name said Wednesday that several highway underpasses and intersections would remain closed to traffic throughout the day.

"At one time, we had all our equipment out and calls waiting," said Bell. Firefighters covered emergencies with the department's fleet of 11 engines and trucks and four vehicles kept in reserve.

Two American Eagle flights were canceled at Abilene Regional Airport during the heaviest of the storm and several flights of both airlines serving Abilene were delayed.

"The wind was really coming out of the north ... just really, really heavy," said Keith Kaspari, airport operations manager. "I couldn't even see across to our airport fire station."

HOUSING

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University Tower, the oldest private dorm in Bryan-College Station, has been successfully inhabited since 1989.

Jason Fort, director of residence life at University Tower, said the dormitory's success can be attributed to customer service and top-notch updated facilities.

"Customer service is definitely of prime importance," Fort said. "It's difficult to advertise, but it sets us apart." Sometimes two, three or even four times the price of on-campus housing, private dorms, such as the Tower and Callaway House, are renovated more regularly than on-campus facilities.

"We renovate and touch up our facilities annually each summer, bringing changes with them," Fort said.

This summer, University Tower added ethernet connections and private phone lines in each room.

On-campus renovation is done in increments each summer. Murray said plans have been made to renovate one balcony-style hall every year to create better living conditions.

"Besides minor touch ups, FHK [complex] hasn't

been renovated since it was built in the 1960s," Murray said. "We will choose one of the three dorms to renovate next year as our project."

The last major work done on campus was in 1988, with the final construction of several modular halls. Residence Life is considering building a new apartment-style hall for Fall 2005, Murray said.

Alex Clinton, resident director at the Callaway House, said almost 20 percent of Callaway residents were sophomores. He said the private dorms have a high retention rate.

"We try to re-create the dorm experience as much as we can," Clinton said. "The residents seem to like that." Murray and Thomas pointed to the convenience many students gain by choosing on-campus accommodations.

"Living on campus allows students to get more involved with campus activities, academics, organizations and the like," Thomas said. The Student Recreation Center, classes and computer labs also are nearby.

Residence halls on campus also provide education classes on sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and other health and safety issues through Residence Education.

However, Fort said he thinks the Towers' success over the years is the reason for many new private dorms, including the two new dorms being built on Northgate.



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