

inadmissible

Higher Power — Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous have long been the destinations to which parents in child-welfare cases are ordered to get help for substance abuse problems. But while the groups purport to be non-religious and nonsectarian in nature, they emphasize kicking the habit via a spiritual approach. Indeed, AA's 12 steps invoke the help of God.



DAVID PERRY DAVIS

That didn't sit well with two clients of Princeton solo **David Perry Davis** — one an atheist, the other an agnostic — who objected to being ordered into the programs. In April, Perry threatened to sue under the First Amendment if the Department of Youth and Family Services did not provide a secular alternative.

With the matter still unresolved last Monday, Davis gave the state a July 5 ultimatum. On Thursday, he got a faxed letter from Deputy Attorney General Meryl Nadler, advising him that the judiciary had revised two forms of orders used in DYFS cases so that nonreligious parents now have the option of attending some "other substance abuse treatment."

Davis, though happy not have spent the July 4th holiday weekend drafting a complaint, says he still wants clarification that the change "applies across the board" in nonfamily contexts, like criminal and delinquency matters.