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Enforcement and Removal

07/25/2019

ICE detainee passes away at Georgia hospital

ATLANTA – A 44-year old Mexican national in the custody of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement at the Stewart Detention Facility in Lumpkin, Georgia, died Wednesday afternoon at an area hospital.

Pedro Arriago-Santoya (a.k.a. Fabian Valdovinos-Salgado, Antonio Valdez-Baldera, Fortino Mendiola, Pedro Santivilla-Arroba, Pedro Santoya, and Pedro Carillo-Santos), was pronounced dead by medical staff at the Piedmont Midtown Medical Center in Columbus, Georgia, at 3:10 p.m. Medical staff identified Mr. Arriago-Santoya's preliminary cause of death as cardio-pulmonary arrest secondary to multi-organ system failure, endocarditis, dilated cardiomyopathy with a low ejection fraction and respiratory failure.

On July 20, at 12:57 p.m., Mr. Arriago-Santoya initially complained to staff at the Stewart Detention Center of abdominal pain. He was promptly seen by a nurse practitioner at Stewart who conducted a medical assessment, and Mr. Arriago-Santoya was then transferred that same day via ambulance to the Southwest Georgia Regional Hospital in Cuthbert, Georgia.

The following day, July 21, at 1:30 p.m., Mr. Arriago-Santoya was transferred from the Southwest Georgia Regional Hospital to the Piedmont Midtown Medical Center for surgery consultation due to suspected gall bladder disease.

Mr. Arriago-Santoya subsequently went into cardiac arrest at the Piedmont Midtown Medical Center July 22 at 3:57 a.m. Medical staff performed life-saving measures to include cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the use of an Automated External Defibrillator that successfully restored his pulse and oxygen levels. Mr. Arriago-Santoya was then placed on a ventilator and moved to the hospital intensive care unit where he remained intubated, on mechanical ventilation, and comatose.

On July 24 at approximately 2:40 p.m. Mr. Arriago-Santoya again went into cardiac arrest, and medical staff again initiated CPR; however, the attending hospital physician pronounced him deceased at approximately 3:10 p.m.

Consistent with the agency's protocols, the appropriate agencies have been notified about the death, including the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General, and the ICE Office of Professional Responsibility. Additionally, ICE has advised Mexican consular representatives who advised they have been unable to locate any next of kin for Mr. Arriago-Santoya.

ICE is firmly committed to the health and welfare of all those in its custody and is undertaking a comprehensive agency-wide review of this incident, as it does in all such cases. Fatalities in ICE custody, statistically, are exceedingly rare and occur at a small fraction of the rate of the U.S. detained population

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as a whole.

This agency's comprehensive review will be conducted by ICE senior leadership to include Enforcement and Removal Operations, the Office of Professional Responsibility and the Office of the Principal Legal Advisor.

Mr. Arriago-Santoya entered ICE custody April 24 in Appling County, Georgia, pursuant to an ICE immigration detainer following his release from local criminal custody after his March 30 arrest by local law enforcement for public drunkenness and probation violations stemming from a prior May 2015 disorderly conduct conviction in Chatham County, Georgia.

Mr. Arriago-Santoya subsequently received all appropriate legal process before the federal immigration courts, and a federal immigration judge ordered him removed from the U.S. to Mexico on June 6. He was in ICE custody awaiting removal to his country of citizenship in accordance with that judicial removal order.

Mr. Arriago-Santoya is the seventh individual to pass away in ICE custody in Fiscal Year 2019.

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