NEW ORLEANS – A Nicaraguan national in the custody of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) passed away at the La Salle General Hospital, Jena, Louisiana, June 23. The preliminary cause of death was reported by hospital medical officials to be cardiac arrest.

Ernesto Rocha-Cuadra, 42, was apprehended by U.S. Border Patrol while illegally entering the U.S. near Andrade, California, on April 17, 2022.

On April 26, 2022, Rocha transferred into ERO New Orleans custody to await completion of his removal proceedings.

Consistent with the ICE protocols, the appropriate components have been notified about the death, including the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG), and the ICE Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR).

Additionally, ICE notified the Consulate General of Nicaragua in Miami of Rocha’s passing.
ICE remains committed to ensuring that all those in its custody reside in safe, secure, and humane environments. Comprehensive medical care is provided from the moment individuals arrive and throughout the entirety of their stay. All people in ICE custody receive medical, dental, and mental health intake screening within 12 hours of arriving at each detention facility, a full health assessment within 14 days of entering ICE custody or arrival at a facility, and access to medical appointments and 24-hour emergency care. At no time during detention is a detained noncitizen denied emergent care.

Upon an official report of a detained noncitizen death, ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) makes official notifications to Congress, non-governmental organization (NGO) stakeholders, and the media and posts a news release with relevant details on the public website within two business days, per agency policy. This information may be accessed here: https://www.ice.gov/newsroom. Additionally, Congressional requirements described in the DHS Appropriations Bill (2018) require ICE to make public all reports regarding an in-custody death within 90 days. These reports may be accessed here: https://www.ice.gov/detain/detainee-death-reporting.

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MEDIA INQUIRIES

For media inquiries about ICE activities, operations, or policies, contact the ICE Office of Public Affairs at (202) 732-4646.

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