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ICE detainee from Mexico passes away in Ohio

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio— A Mexican man in the custody of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at the Northeast Ohio Correctional Center, Youngstown, Ohio, died Thursday morning at an area hospital.

David Hernandez Colula, 34, was pronounced dead at 1:49 a.m. local time by medical professionals at Mercy Health-St. Elizabeth Youngstown Hospital, where he was transported after facility staff found him unresponsive in his cell. Efforts by facility staff and emergency personnel to revive him were unsuccessful. The preliminary cause of death appears to be self-inflicted strangulation; however, the case is currently under investigation.

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 notified the Mexican consulate and Mr. Hernandez Colula’s next of kin.

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 fraction of the national average for the U.S. detained population.

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. Hernandez Colula entered ICE custody Dec. 6, 2019, upon release from the St. Joseph County Jail, Centerville, Michigan, following a Dec. 4, 2019 arrest by Sturgis Police Department for an outstanding warrant. He was originally booked into Calhoun County Jail, Battle Creek, Michigan, and transferred Dec. 10, 2019, to NEOCC to continue his immigration proceedings.

Mr. Hernandez Colula was previously apprehended by U. S. Border Patrol Dec. 4, 2014 in Rochester, New York, and transferred into ICE custody pending removal proceedings. He was released on bond Dec. 8, 2014. An immigration judge changed venue to Cleveland, Ohio, following the relocation of Mr. Hernandez Colula.

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