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### ICE detainee passes away after suffering heart attack

NEW ORLEANS – A Laotian national in the custody of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) died Thursday morning at LaSalle General Hospital in Jena, Louisiana, after suffering a heart attack.

Thongchay Saengsiri, 65, was transferred from the LaSalle Detention Facility via ambulance to the hospital March 17, after experiencing shortness of breath. Physicians at LaSalle General Hospital were not able to stabilize Saengsiri’s condition and declared him deceased at 11:22 a.m.

ICE officials contacted Saengsiri’s family members following his hospitalization along with representatives from the Laotian Embassy. Consistent with the agency’s protocols, the appropriate state health and local law enforcement agencies have been advised of the death, as have the Department of Homeland Security’s Office of Inspector General and the ICE Office of Professional Responsibility.

Saengsiri had been in ICE custody since Dec. 18, 2014, following his release from the Draper County Correctional Facility in Elmore, Alabama, where he served a 90-day sentence for possession of marijuana and probation violation. Additionally, Saengsiri had multiple prior drug convictions and one conviction for fraud. As is the case with all ICE detainees, Saengsiri underwent a medical screening shortly after coming into ICE custody, which uncovered no serious health issues.

Saengsiri was ordered removed by an immigration judge on March 2 but reserved appeal of that decision.

Saengsiri is the third detainee to pass away in ICE custody in fiscal year 2016.

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