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Detainee Death Notifications

09/22/2020

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Mexican man in ICE custody passes away at Georgia hospital

ATLANTA – A 61-year-old Mexican man briefly in the custody of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) following his release from federal prison passed away Monday at the Piedmont Columbus Regional Hospital in Columbus, Georgia. The preliminary cause of death was reported by hospital medical officials to be cardiopulmonary arrest, secondary to complications of coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Cipriano Chavez-Alvarez was pronounced dead at 4:06 a.m. EDT by medical professionals at Piedmont Columbus Regional Hospital. Chavez-Alvarez had been admitted to the hospital from the Stewart Detention Center on August 15, 2020, 15 days after his entry into ICE custody following his release from the Edgefield Federal Correction Institution in Edgefield, South Carolina, due to compassionate release on medical grounds due to chronic illnesses of lymphoma, gout, hyperlipidemia, hypertension and hypothyroidism.

At the time of his release from federal prison, and transfer into ICE custody, Chavez-Alvarez was serving a life sentence pursuant to his March 1993 conviction in U.S. District Court of Arizona for conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine.

At the time of his death, Chavez-Alvarez was in ICE custody pending his removal to Mexico in accordance with a final order of removal issued by a federal immigration judge in Los Angeles on February 27, 1991.

Chavez-Alvarez initially entered ICE custody at the Irwin County Detention Center following his release from federal prison on July 31, 2020. He was then transferred to the Stewart Detention Center on August 5, 2020 for removal, in accordance with the order of the courts.

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 of Chavez-Alvarez's death; Mexican consular officials have notified his 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.

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The agency's review will be conducted by ICE senior leadership, including Enforcement and Removal Operations and the Office of the Principal Legal Advisor.

ICE's Health Service Corps ensures the provision of necessary medical care services as required by ICE Performance-Based National Detention Standards and based on the medical needs of the detainee. Comprehensive medical care is provided from the moment detainees arrive and throughout the entirety of their stay. All ICE detainees 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 daily sick call and 24-hour emergency care. Pursuant to our commitment to the welfare of those in the agency's custody, ICE annually spends more than \$269 million on the spectrum of healthcare services provided to detainees

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