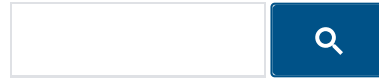




U.S. Customs and
Border Protection

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Protection



Update: Death in Custody of 8-Year-Old in Harlingen, Texas

Release Date: Sun, 05/21/2023

CBP's Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) is investigating the tragic death of an eight-year-old child in U.S. Border Patrol Custody which occurred on May 17, 2023, in Harlingen, TX. Consistent with agency [policy](#) and CBP's commitment to transparency and accountability, we are sharing information about this incident as quickly as possible. CBP OPR will continue to review this matter as thoroughly and expeditiously as possible and CBP anticipates releasing additional information in the coming days. Information below is based on an initial review of records and video by CBP's OPR and will be subject to verification as part of the investigative process.

On May 9, 2023, at approximately 9:34 PM, a family group consisting of two parents (an adult female mother and adult male father) and three children (aged 8, 13, and 14) were taken into U.S. Border Patrol custody as part of a larger group of 47 non-citizens approximately eight tenths of a mile southeast of the Gateway International Port of Entry in Brownsville, TX. All members of the family group were Honduran citizens except the eight-year-old daughter who was a citizen of Panama. Records indicate that shortly after being taken into custody, the entire group was moved approximately four tenths of a mile east to the CBP-operated Camp Monument Staging Area where they awaited transportation to the Donna Processing Facility (DPF) in Donna, TX. The family of 5 was manifested for transport to the DPF at 9:50 PM, on May 9, 2023, and eventually transported there by bus in the early morning hours of May 10, 2023.

Review of video by CBP OPR personnel revealed the family of five arrived at the DPF at approximately 7:50 AM on Wednesday, May 10, 2023, and moved through various stages of intake and in-processing over the next four hours. At approximately 12:20 PM, the family entered the medical screening area and can be seen interacting with CBP-contracted medical personnel. At

one point on the video footage, the mother can be seen handing several papers to the medical provider. CBP records indicate the eight-year-old was medically assessed at this time, did not complain of any acute illnesses or injuries, but the family did report a medical history including the chronic conditions of sickle cell anemia and heart disease. After completing the medical assessment, the female members of the family, specifically the mother, the fourteen-year-old adolescent, and the eight-year-old girl were escorted to their housing pod.

Further review of DPF video by CBP OPR revealed that on May 14, 2023, at approximately 4:11 PM, the mother and eight-year-old girl were escorted from their housing pod to the DPF medical unit where she can be seen entering a treatment area at 4:45 PM. CBP records indicate the eight-year-old girl had voiced complaints of abdominal pain, nasal congestion, and cough. Contract medical staff recorded a tympanic temperature of 101.8 degrees Fahrenheit, after which a point of care influenza test was administered which yielded a positive result for Influenza A and a negative result for Influenza B. Medical personnel provided the girl with acetaminophen, ibuprofen, and prescribed and administered doses of Oseltamivir (Tamiflu), as well as Ondansetron (Zofran). During this medical encounter, CBP contracted medical personnel documented a past medical history including cardiomyopathy (noting the girl had undergone heart surgery at the age of 5), about which the family reported that she has been stable since the operation, but still requires the continued care of a cardiologist. Based on agency protocols, a decision was made to transfer the entire family to the U.S. Border Patrol Station in Harlingen, TX (HRL), which has been designated for cases requiring medical isolation for individuals diagnosed with or closely exposed to communicable diseases.

Further review of DPF video by CBP OPR revealed that the entire family was reunited in the DPF out-processing area at approximately 5:09 PM and that they departed for the Harlingen Border Patrol Station (HRL) in Harlingen, Texas in a van approximately one hour later, arriving there at approximately 7:13 PM on May 14, 2023. CBP records indicate the eight-year-old girl was medically assessed by CBP-contracted medical personnel immediately upon her arrival at HRL.

CBP records indicate the eight-year-old girl continued to be administered Oseltamivir (Tamiflu) twice daily as directed on Monday, May 15, 2023, and Tuesday, May 16, 2023. CBP records also indicate the girl was administered ibuprofen at 7:45 PM on Wednesday, May 16, 2023, and again at 4:35 AM on May 17, 2023.

At this time, CBP can confirm that medical records documented that the eight-year-old girl and her

mother came to the HRL medical unit at least three times on Wednesday, May 17, 2023. During the first visit, records indicate that the child complained of vomiting and was administered Ondansetron (Zofran) and instructed to hydrate and return if needed. During the second visit, the child complained of a stomachache. CBP contracted medical personnel annotated that she was stable and instructed the mother to follow-up if needed. CBP records indicate that a third visit took place at approximately 1:55 PM, during which the mother was carrying the girl who appeared to be having a seizure, after which records indicate the child became unresponsive. CBP-contracted medical personnel subsequently began to administer CPR and summoned emergency medical services.

At approximately 2:07 PM, South Texas Emergency Care (STEC) emergency medical services arrived at HRL and took over lifesaving. The girl and her mother were transported to the Valley Baptist Medical Center in Harlingen, TX, where the girl was declared deceased by medical personnel at that facility at 2:50 PM.

An autopsy was performed on the child's remains by the Cameron County Forensic Pathologist on the morning of Friday, May 19, 2023. Initial findings from the autopsy, which were shared with CBP OPR, indicated an absence of gross physical trauma, the presence of pleural effusions within the chest cavity, mentioned evidence that had been observed of the attempted surgical repair of the girl's aortic stenosis, and also referenced the provided history of sickle cell anemia. Additional details regarding the cause and manner of death will be released by the medical examiner upon the completion of additional forensic medical laboratory tests, to include toxicological and pathological assays on recovered bodily fluids and tissue samples.

CBP OPR's ongoing investigation is closely examining the facts and circumstances surrounding the entirety of time the family spent in custody at HRL Station, and CBP intends to release additional information as it becomes available in the coming days.

This statement is an update to the [initial statement](#), to provide additional information.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the comprehensive management, control, and protection of our nation's borders, combining customs, immigration, border security, and agricultural protection at and between official ports of entry.

Tags: [Accountability and Transparency](#)

Last Modified: May 21, 2023