

# **Mexican national who served 12 year sentence in Massachusetts prison dies from Coronavirus while in ICE custody**

A 51-year-old unlawfully present Mexican national subject to mandatory detention under federal law in the custody of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement at the Glades County Detention Center (GCDC) in Florida died Sunday afternoon at a Palm Beach County hospital, where he had been receiving treatment for several weeks.

Onoval Perez-Montufa, 51, was pronounced dead at 4:27 p.m. local time by hospital medical staff at the Lakeside Medical Center in Belle Glade, Florida, where he had been receiving inpatient treatment since July 1 after reporting shortness of breath that same day to facility staff at the Glades County Detention Center.

A COVID-19 test administered by medical staff at the Glades County Detention Center came back positive on July 2, and Glades staff promptly notified the hospital. Per the agency's COVID-19 prevention protocols, all persons are screened upon arrival at all ICE facilities.

Perez-Montufa initially entered ICE custody on June 15 following his release from federal prison in Massachusetts. Perez-Montufa was released from Federal Medical Center – Devens in Ayer, Massachusetts, after serving more than 12 years of a 20-year prison sentence pursuant to his conviction in February 2008 for conspiracy to distribute, and possession with intent to distribute, 5 kilograms or more of cocaine.

As an aggravated felon, Perez-Montufa was subject to mandatory detention by ICE under federal law. At the time of his death, Perez-Montufa was in ICE custody pending removal to Mexico.

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.

Consistent with the agency's protocols, the appropriate agencies 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 has notified the Mexican consulate and Perez-Montufa's next of kin.

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

Specific to Coronavirus, ICE has taken extensive precautions to limit the potential spread of COVID-19. An extensive listing of all the precautions and procedures this agency has taken to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19 at [ice.gov/coronavirus](https://ice.gov/coronavirus). ICE makes arrest and custody determinations on a case-by-case basis given the totality of circumstances in each case. Since March, the agency's detained population has declined by more than 40 percent.

ICE's Health Service Corps (IHSC) 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.