



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Department of Homeland Security

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The Office of the Inspector General Completes Investigation of the Death of Eight-Year-Old Guatemalan Child Who Died in U.S. Border Patrol Custody

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) completed an investigation into the death of a Guatemalan child who died in U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) custody.

The investigation found no misconduct or malfeasance by DHS personnel:

- On December 18, 2018, an 8-year-old child and his father were apprehended near El Paso, Texas.
- On December 23, 2018, they were transported to the Alamogordo, New Mexico USBP Checkpoint to await family placement.
- On December 24, 2018, a USBP agent noticed that the child appeared ill and interviewed the father, who requested medical treatment for his son.
- USBP transported the child and the child's father to the nearest hospital for evaluation and treatment.
- The hospital staff diagnosed the child with an upper respiratory infection, prescribed amoxicillin and acetaminophen, and discharged the child, who was returned to the USBP facility.
- USBP personnel obtained and administered the prescriptions to the child.
- The child's condition improved briefly, and subsequently worsened.
- USBP again transported the child and father to the hospital; upon arrival, the child was unresponsive and pronounced dead.
- OIG conducted a detailed investigation, with assistance from CBP's Office of Professional Responsibility, and coordinated with the local medical examiner's office.
- The state medical examiner's autopsy report found the cause of death was "complications of influenza B infection with Staphylococcus aureus superinfection and sepsis." The investigation did not reveal evidence that USBP personnel were aware that the child was diagnosed with influenza B.