



SAN DIEGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Critical Incident Review Board In-Custody Death Information Release

DATE OF INCIDENT: February 11, 2022

TIME: 2:12 p.m.

LOCATION: UCSD Medical Center (San Diego Central Jail)

Due to the serious nature of these incidents, the Sheriff's Homicide Unit conducts a thorough investigation of every in-custody death. In addition to the investigation conducted by the Sheriff's Homicide Unit, the Sheriff's Critical Incident Review Board (CIRB) conducts a review of in-custody deaths. The CIRB is comprised of department leadership and the sheriff's legal advisor and performs a critical review of each incident. This review aims to identify misconduct, criminal negligence or behavior, policy violations, training deficiencies, or other areas where we can improve and make our facilities safer for staff and individuals in our custody. This release synthesizes the reviewed incident and any resultant actions taken to improve our operations.

At the time of his booking on September 17, 2020, Incarcerated Person Rafael Ruiz had been diagnosed with end-stage renal failure and was housed at the San Diego Central Jail (SDCJ) to facilitate dialysis. On January 31, 2022, Ruiz was transferred from SDCJ to the UCSD Medical Center Emergency Department. Based on his declining health, Ruiz' family elected to place him on comfort care measures. On February 11, 2022, at 2:12 p.m., an attending UCSD physician pronounced Ruiz deceased. San Diego Sheriff's Homicide investigators, a criminalist, and a field evidence technician responded to the hospital to document the scene.

An investigator from the San Diego County Medical Examiner's Office took custody of Ruiz' remains and conducted an independent investigation and external post-mortem examination. They determined the cause of death to be complications of COVID-19, with end-stage renal failure and diabetes as comorbidities, and the manner of death to be natural. (ME Case #2022-00585)

The CIRB conducted a preliminary review of this incident on April 13, 2022. Given the circumstances of Ruiz' passing, no policy recommendations or action items were identified for this event.