



SAN DIEGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Critical Incident Review Board

In-Custody Death Information Release

DATE OF INCIDENT: July 29, 2023

TIME: 4:57 p.m.

LOCATION: Scripps Mercy Hospital (George Bailey Detention Facility)

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. The focus of the CIRB is to assess the department's civil exposure because of a given incident. The review may identify potential misconduct, criminal negligence or behavior, policy violations, training deficiencies, or other areas where we can improve and make our facilities safer for staff and those in our custody. This release synthesizes the reviewed incident and any resultant actions taken to improve our operations.

On July 19, 2023, at about 10:20 a.m., Sheriff's deputies at the George Bailey Detention Facility responded to a cell intercom call box notification. When they arrived at the cell they found Incarcerated Person Jonathan McDowell unresponsive, with no pulse, and not breathing. There was one other person inside the cell with McDowell, who stated he was the person who activated the intercom call box. Deputies immediately initiated cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), summoned Sheriff's medical staff, and called for a 911 response. At about 10:25 a.m., Sheriff's medical staff arrived to assist with lifesaving measures, including applying an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and providing oxygen supplemented rescue breathing. At approximately 10:31 a.m., Sheriff's medical staff were able to detect a pulse.

At about 10:42 a.m., CalFire paramedics arrived and took over lifesaving measures, and at about 10:54 a.m. they transported McDowell to Scripps Mercy Hospital. McDowell continued treatment at the hospital for the next several days, and family was able to be with him. Despite the efforts of hospital staff, a doctor pronounced Jonathan McDowell deceased on July 29, 2023, at 4:57 p.m. As is the protocol for all in-custody deaths, the San Diego Sheriff's Homicide Unit investigated this incident and documented the scene.

The San Diego County Medical Examiner's Office conducted an independent investigation and post-mortem. The Medical Examiner preliminarily determined the cause of McDowell's death was "asphyxia due to hanging" and the manner was "suicide." The final Medical Examiner's report is still pending completion. (ME Case #2023-2455)

The CIRB conducted a preliminary review of this incident on October 18, 2023, with no action items or policy recommendations at that time.