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Joint Statement from ICE and CBP on stillbirth in custody

On Feb. 22, while being processed for release from DHS custody, a 24-year-old Honduran woman went into premature labor and delivered a stillborn baby at the Port Isabel Detention Center (PIDC).

The woman, whose name and identifying details are being withheld in order to protect her privacy, reported being six months pregnant at the time of her apprehension by the U.S. Border Patrol (USBP), shortly before midnight on February 18 near Hidalgo, Texas. While in USBP custody, she was taken to the hospital and cleared for release on Feb. 21 after receiving two medical screenings. In the late afternoon on Feb. 22, she was transferred to ICE custody to be processed for release.

That same evening, while being processed for release by ICE, she began complaining of abdominal discomfort and was examined by the ICE Health Service Corps (IHSC). The clinical director was called and ordered that she be sent to the hospital. EMS was called. At that time, she conveyed that the baby was coming. She went into premature labor, at 27 weeks pregnant, and delivered an unresponsive male infant. IHSC initiated CPR and EMS transported them both to the Valley Baptist Medical Center in Harlingen, Texas, where the infant was later pronounced dead.

The woman remains in ICE custody awaiting medical clearance, after which she will be released from custody.

Although for investigative and reporting purposes, a stillbirth is not considered an in-custody death, ICE and CBP officials are proactively disclosing the details of this tragic event to be transparent with Congress, the media and the public.

ICE's policy on the identification and monitoring of pregnant detainees can be found here and frequently asked questions here.

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Last Reviewed/Updated: 02/25/2019