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# Guatemalan national passes away at Gerald Champion Regional Medical Center in Alamogordo, New Mexico

**Release Date:** December 25, 2018

An eight year-old Guatemalan national previously apprehended by U.S. Customs and Border Protection was died shortly after midnight on December 25 at Gerald Champion Regional Medical Center in Alamogordo, New Mexico.

According to initial reporting, while in CBP custody earlier on December 24, a U.S. Border Patrol agent noticed that the child showed signs of potential illness. The father and his son were promptly transferred to the Gerald Champion Regional Medical Center. The child was initially diagnosed by hospital staff with a common cold, and when evaluated for release, hospital staff found a fever. The child was held for an additional 90 minutes for observation and then released from the hospital mid-afternoon on December 24 with prescriptions for amoxicillin and Ibuprofen.

The evening of December 24, the child exhibited nausea and vomiting and was transferred back to the Gerald Champion Regional Medical Center for evaluation and treatment. The child passed shortly after midnight on December 25.

The official cause of the child's death is not known. Consistent with CBP policy, CBP's Office of Professional Responsibility will conduct a review. The Department of Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General has been notified. The Guatemalan government has been notified and is currently engaging the father and any family members in Guatemala. CBP has

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also made the appropriate Congressional notifications consistent with [CBP's Interim Procedures on Notification of a Death in Custody](#).

(<https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/assets/documents/2018-Dec/Interim-Procedures-on-Notification-of-a-Death-in-Custody-December-2018.pdf>). CBP will release more details as available and appropriate, and will ensure an independent and thorough review of the circumstances.

DHS has continued to see a dramatic increase in unaccompanied children and family units arriving at our borders illegally or without authorization. Consistent with existing law, these individuals are held at federal facilities pending their removal or release into the interior of the United States with a notice to appear at a court hearing. During their period of detention they received medical screenings and further treatment as needed.

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