



WASHINGTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Conserving the Peace Through Values Driven Service
Sheriff Pat Garrett

PRESS RELEASE

Sheriff's Response to 2014 Tragic Death in the Washington County Jail

November 30, 2016 - In April of 2014, Madaline Pitkin passed away while under medical care at the Washington County Jail. In response to this incident, the Sheriff stated, "On behalf of everyone at the Washington County Sheriff's Office, I express my deepest sympathies and condolences to Ms. Pitkin's family and friends. Madaline Pitkin's death was a tragedy, and we remain committed to taking decisive steps to make sure that we have the highest level of health care available."

The Oregon State Medical Examiner's Office concluded Ms. Pitkin died from "complications of chronic intravenous drug abuse" and the circumstances of her death appear to indicate her medical care, provided by the contracted health care provider Corizon, was inadequate. In the seven days Ms. Pitkin was in the jail, deputies repeatedly expressed concern about her condition to Corizon staff. On April 23, 2014, the deputy supervising the unit where Ms. Pitkin was housed was concerned about Ms. Pitkin, and made calls to Corizon staff requesting she be seen. Ms. Pitkin was transferred to the jail's medical observation unit shortly thereafter. The following day, April 24, Ms. Pitkin collapsed and jail staff did their very best to revive her.

During the normal administrative review of medical records in the days following Ms. Pitkin's death, the Sheriff was shocked and dismayed to learn of Corizon's apparent lack of response to her written requests for medical help. Accordingly, the Sheriff asked the District Attorney to assign the County's Major Crimes Team to conduct a criminal investigation of Ms. Pitkin's death. The investigation did not find criminal wrongdoing, but it did document several very troubling issues with the care Ms. Pitkin received.

Further disappointing is the fact that in the two years from Ms. Pitkin's death, Corizon remains unwilling to resolve this claim without forcing Ms. Pitkin's family to file a federal lawsuit and relive their daughter's tragic death. Corizon took a similar approach in dealing with the death of an Oregon inmate at another jail, Kelly Conrad Green, who died under their care in 2013. Corizon settled the Green case last year shortly before trial by paying Green's family seven million dollars. As a result of these facts, and because Corizon refuses to comply with contract provisions which require they indemnify the County for Corizon's negligent performance, Washington County will likely join plaintiff in filing claims against Corizon related to this incident.

In 2015, Washington County began contracting with a new medical provider for the jail. The new provider – NaphCare – has demonstrated a clear commitment to significantly improve services for inmates. NaphCare's own initiative has resulted in health professionals having better access to inmates which provides more effective and efficient medical care. Sheriff Garrett said, "I could not be more pleased with their performance to date. Strong partnerships with professionals from the County Health Department and NaphCare will help ensure a more comprehensive and compassionate approach to inmate care."