

Courier-Gazette / Camden Herald

Prison reacts to prevent flu outbreak

By Stephen Betts | Mar 10, 2011



Warren — The Maine Corrections Department is taking steps to prevent a flu outbreak at the Bolduc Correctional Facility.

But the associate commissioner of the department said that the steps are not related to the death of a 29-year-old prisoner on Tuesday, March 8.

Denise Lord said one inmate has come down with the seasonal flu and as a result, public health nurses were brought in Thursday, March 10 to offer flu vaccines to inmates and staff who have not previously been vaccinated.

The nurses are also offering Tamiflu to inmates and staff, Lord said. Tamiflu is a drug given to people who have shown symptoms of the flu for less than 48 hours and is considered to lessen the severity of the illness.

The decision to bring in the public health nurses came after consultations with the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

On March 8, 29-year-old Ryan Allan Calor was found dead in his cell at the Bolduc minimum security prison during the regular morning count of inmates. The Maine Medical Examiner's Office said Calor died of left-sided pneumonia.

Lord said she could not comment on whether Calor had been treated by medical personnel before his death, saying medical information on inmates is confidential by law.

There is no infirmary at the Bolduc facility.

The death of Calor comes nearly two years after the death of another inmate at the Maine State Prison, also in Warren, a case that has yet to be solved.

Sheldon A. Weinstein died April 24, 2009. The Maine Medical Examiner's Office concluded his death was a homicide brought on by blunt force trauma.

Weinstein had been transferred to the Warren prison eight days before his death because the

medical resources were considered to be superior. Weinstein suffered from type I diabetes that required multiple daily insulin injections.

A notice of claim filed by Weinstein's estate with the state claimed that he was beaten on April 20 at the Warren prison.

"Although Mr. Weinstein's injuries were obvious, prison medical personnel failed to exercise reasonable care in diagnosing his life threatening condition," the claim states. "The prison medical staff failed to diagnose and treat his medical emergency despite his pleas for help over the several days prior to his death."

Assistant Attorney General Leane Zainea said March 10 that the case remains an active investigation. No one has been charged in the beating death.

The prison also conducted an internal investigation. One guard was fired and a second supervisory officer was demoted to a correction officer.

And in November 2010, members of the Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition announced they would seek a federal investigation into the Nov. 27, 2009, death of state prison inmate Victor Valdez.

The advocacy group held a rally at the Statehouse Hall of Flags in memory of Valdez and to announce plans to pursue a further investigation by the Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Valdez died after spending eight days in the Special Management Unit at Maine State Prison in Warren. Although Valdez reportedly suffered from kidney disease and required three dialysis treatments a week, coalition members allege that Valdez received no dialysis while in the unit.

In late October 2010, after a months-long investigation, Deputy Attorney General William Stokes of Augusta issued a finding that said Valdez died of natural causes and that prison guards did nothing that caused his death.

<http://knox.villagesoup.com/news/story/prison-reacts-to-prevent-flu-outbreak/385348?cid=184885>