



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CITY OF CHICAGO UPDATE ON TEMPORARY SHELTER AT 2241 S. HALSTED  
AND THE DEATH OF JEAN CARLOS MARTINEZ RIVERO**

**CHICAGO** — According to data collected from the City's landing zone, the Martinez Rivero family arrived in Chicago on November 30, and on that same day, underwent intake at the shelter at 2241 S. Halsted. According to the incident report, on December 17, the Martinez family left the shelter for part of the morning and early afternoon, returning at 2:32 p.m. Approximately 13 minutes later, shelter staff witnessed a medical emergency and immediately responded by calling 911, after which staff began administering first aid to the child.

Shelter staff performed chest compressions while waiting for emergency responders to arrive. Chicago firefighters and paramedics arrived shortly thereafter and immediately transported the child to Comer Children's Hospital where he was pronounced deceased.

This incident is not related to the three children taken to the hospital on Monday, Nov. 18. The child does not appear to have died from an infectious disease, according to the Chicago Department of Public Health, and there is no evidence of an outbreak at the shelter.

The CDPH team will continue to evaluate the situation. The cause of death is still being investigated.

**Updated Dec. 18 City of Chicago Statement**

Chicago continues to prioritize safety and improving our New Arrivals Mission, but any life lost prematurely is a grave tragedy. The death of a child is a deeply tragic event, and our condolences go out to the Martinez Rivero family. The Chicago Department of Public Health is coordinating with the Cook County Medical Examiner, who is investigating the cause of death, along with the Mayor's Office and other city agencies to investigate this incident. Several other individuals from the shelter at 2241 S. Halsted were transported by ambulance to a nearby hospital, and



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several have already been discharged with respiratory virus symptoms. The cases do not appear related other than having originated in the same shelter, and symptoms are consistent with ongoing seasonal respiratory trends. We will continue to provide updates as more information becomes available.

The City of Chicago is currently sheltering 13,992 new arrivals at 27 temporary shelters. Many new arrivals survive brutal and dangerous journeys to border states and are promptly and inhumanely transported with little to no triage. Border states do not take appropriate measures to ensure the safety of individuals they load onto buses. As a result, interior cities like Chicago are receiving new arrivals with more severe medical needs, since many asylum seekers are spending the night outdoors without access to sanitation, drinking water or food immediately prior to their journeys. This carelessness directly contributed to the death of a three-year-old girl in September of this year and may continue to have devastating effects.

When new arrivals reach our city from the Southern border, the City of Chicago puts forth every effort to keep them healthy. Decompressing police stations was crucial to new arrivals' wellness as we have implemented thorough health screenings at shelters. Health screenings are provided to all new arrivals to identify individuals with acute medical conditions or emergencies that should be directed to an emergency room.

The shelter at 2241 S. Halsted St. houses a large population of new arrivals who might have multiple needs for evaluation. For this and any other shelter, anyone with acute medical needs that requires immediate attention should be transported to the nearest emergency department for assistance. Once placed at 2241 S. Halsted, or any City shelter, all new arrivals are offered opt-in transportation to Cook County Health (CCH) for a medical intake or a sick visit.

Additionally, the Chicago Department of Public Health funds healthcare partners - Heartland Alliance Health and Lawndale Christian Health Center - to go onsite to shelters weekly to provide shelter-based care to individuals who might not have plans to go to CCH. Strike teams from UI Health and Rush have been deployed to shelters on an as-needed basis to address outbreak responses, and currently visit the Halsted shelter twice a week to provide additional testing and vaccinations. City shelters also receive healthcare referral lists to provide new arrivals that are interested in seeking care directly and on their own, and the City is currently in conversation on exploring options for further expanding access to medical resources in shelter settings. Transportation to nearby emergency departments is provided to shelter residents with acute needs or who are experiencing urgent medical duress.



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Many new arrivals receive catch-up vaccinations during their scheduled medical encounters at the Cook County Health Belmont Cragin migrant clinic, as well as from other Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and other providers caring for new arrivals. The Chicago Department of Public Health continues to support shelter-based care through its partners, including on-site screenings, infection prevention, and vaccinations.

An investigation is ongoing and any changes to safety protocols for staff will be made based on the findings. Currently, physical health protocol in an emergency (i.e. chest pain, difficulty breathing, decreased responsiveness, confusion, unstoppable bleeding, severe pain, blue or unexplained pale skin), shelter staff are directed to call 9-1-1 and report any medical emergencies in line with the Critical Incident Reporting protocol. Shelter staff may also refer people to Cook County Health, FQHCs, Shelter Base Care (LCOs) for non-urgent care.

We are at a critical point in the humanitarian crisis and the city is facing the challenge to provide shelter for the daily influx of new arrivals sent to Chicago from the southern border. All temporary emergency shelters that have been opened were selected due to the large capacity they can safely serve; the facility is in good condition, requires minimal upgrades and are available for emergency activation within a short timeframe. With the fluid nature of this endeavor, and the high number of individuals arriving each day it is vital we provide safe, secure, and temporary emergency shelter for asylum seekers to receive necessary services to resettle in Chicago or another destination with dignity.

The Johnson Administration has continuously worked to improve shelter conditions by renegotiating inherited contracts, issuing RFPs, and prioritizing safety. We are committed to continuing to work collaboratively with the Department of Family & Support Services and mutual aid groups on improving this operation.

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