



**OFFICE OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL
DISTRICT ATTORNEY OF COLORADO
District Attorney Alexis King**

Sheriff Reggie Marinelli
Jefferson County Sheriff's Office
200 Jefferson County Parkway
Golden, Colorado
80401

Re: *In custody death of Ms. Chavez, August 27, 2025*

Dear Sheriff Marinelli,

The First Judicial District's Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) has completed its investigation into the death of Sasha Renee Chavez on August 27, 2025, while Ms. Chavez was in custody at the Jefferson County Detention Center (the "Jail"). As you know, the multi-jurisdictional CIRT team conducts independent and thorough investigations into any incident in which a law enforcement officer within the First Judicial District uses deadly force, or attempts to use deadly force, against a person while acting under the color of official law enforcement duties. CIRT also responds in situations involving the death of a person who is in the custody of a law enforcement officer, when there is a reasonable belief that an officer engaged with or contributed to the death of the decedent. Lastly, CIRT protocols also allow a law enforcement executive to request a CIRT response at their discretion and that is the provision under which CIRT responded here.

The CIRT response and investigation was led by Commander Mark Schmachtenberger of the Lakewood Police Department. Commander Schmachtenberger presented this investigation to my office on October 3, 2025. Upon receipt, my office conducted a thorough review of the CIRT investigation. Based on interviews of sworn staff, unsworn staff, and inmates, as well as surveillance videos and physical evidence, there is no evidence that law enforcement engaged in any criminal conduct that caused the death of Ms. Chavez, and thus, I do not find law enforcement criminally liable for her death.



At the time of her death, Ms. Chavez was a thirty-seven-year-old female in the jail who arrived after her arrest by the Wheat Ridge Police Department (“WRPD”) on August 8, 2025, for new charges of second-degree burglary, first-degree criminal trespass, criminal possession of another’s identification document, and criminal possession of a financial device. Ms. Chavez was received by the Jefferson County Jail at about 6:10 PM that same day.

Upon intake at the jail, she was interviewed by an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). Ms. Chavez reported a diagnosis of hypertension, several mental health diagnoses, and a history of drug use. Ms. Chavez stated she did “all the drugs,” but then said it was a joke and asked the EMT not to note that. The EMT still noted it. Ms. Chavez was cleared for general population and subsequently assigned to module 6B, cell 6. Once classified as a Maximum Pretrial inmate, Ms. Chavez was moved to module 6A, cell 44, on August 13, 2025, where she remained until the time of her death.

On August 19, 2025, Ms. Chavez reported to medical that the last time she used drugs was around August 7, 2025. Days later, on August 22, 2025, Ms. Chavez sent a kite (written communication) to the medical unit. In the kite, Ms. Chavez shared her medications, dosages, and pharmacy. She also noted that she would continue sending kites and work with her public defender until her medication needs were met. Ms. Chavez was not getting her prescribed medications as they had not been verified.

During the nightshift on August 26, 2025, deputies 1 and 2 both did consistent walks in the module as required by policy. Both deputies noted that Ms. Chavez was awake for most of the night. Deputy 2 noted they had seen Ms. Chavez awake between 3:00 AM and 3:30 AM during one of the walks. Deputy 1 conducted the last walk in 6A around 5:25 AM and reported seeing Ms. Chavez breathing.

At about 5:47 AM, Deputy 1 started serving breakfast in unit 3. Ms. Chavez did not come out of her cell when her door was opened. Inmate 2 checked on Ms. Chavez before going down to get her own tray. Inmate 1 checked on Ms. Chavez after she had retrieved her tray. Inmate 2 checked on Ms. Chavez again after getting her tray. Inmate 2 opened the door wider let Deputy 1 know that Ms. Chavez was not responding before going to her own cell. Deputy 1 asked Deputy 2 to go and check on Ms. Chavez.

At about 5:53 AM, Deputy 2 entered cell 44 and attempted to wake Ms. Chavez. Deputy 2 found Ms. Chavez non-responsive and without a pulse. Deputy 2 called for medical to respond and started life-saving efforts. Deputy 2 first pulled Ms. Chavez towards the door for better positioning for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). Deputy 1 arrived and administered the first dose of Narcan.

At about 5:55 AM, Deputy 3 and the charge nurse assisted with pulling Ms. Chavez out of the cell and to the top-tier platform for more room where they continued lifesaving efforts.



Additional medical staff arrived on scene and continued lifesaving efforts. Efforts included two more doses of Narcan and three rounds of Epinephrine. They attempted to use an Automated External Defibrillator (AED), but no shock was advised. The Lund University Cardiopulmonary Assist System (LUCAS) machine took over CPR efforts, and medical staff attempted an oral airway and glucagon. Paramedics arrived and took over. Medical staff never got a rhythm or a pulse. They did not get a response whatsoever. Ms. Chavez was pronounced deceased by Doctor One at 6:39 AM. The scene was processed, and evidence was collected with CIRT oversight. Two papers were collected from Ms. Chavez's cell, which later tested positive for fentanyl.

There had been three different reports of drugs in the jail recently, involving inmates in modules 6A and 6B. They were documented in three reports, one on August 22, 2025, and two on August 26, 2025.

An autopsy was performed on August 28, 2025, by forensic pathologist Dr. Dawn Holmes. Dr. Holmes determined that Ms. Chavez's cause of death was due to combined drug intoxication. Hypertensive cardiovascular disease and chronic alcoholism were significant contributing factors. The manner of death was ruled an accident. Toxicology showed Ms. Chavez had Fentanyl at 21 ng/mL, Amphetamine at 99 ng/mL, and Methamphetamine at 280 ng/mL in her system. There was no significant physical trauma other than those consistent with lifesaving measures.

Given the facts set forth by Commander Schmachtenberger, and upon review by my office, Ms. Chavez's death was not caused by any criminal actions taken by law enforcement. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Regards,



Alexis D. King
District Attorney
First Judicial District

