

Family: Man who died in jail was denied basic medical care

July 27, 2020

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The family of a man who died in a South Dakota county jail has filed a civil rights lawsuit, arguing that he died because he was denied basic medical care for his chronic health conditions.

Seryl Leroy Pomani, 30, died in the custody of Hughes County Jail after experiencing chronic health complications related to diabetes, hypertension and asthma, according to the lawsuit filed in Central Division of the U.S. District Court for the District of South Dakota.

The lawsuit says jail staff were aware of Pomani’s health conditions when he was booked on July 13, 2018, for third-degree burglary. Staff found that his blood sugar was abnormally high, but the jail nurse had left for the weekend and said she would evaluate him when she returned, the lawsuit alleges. Pomani’s health deteriorated, but the jail’s policy was that only the jailhouse nurse could approve medications, according to the lawsuit.



Pomani was found unresponsive in his cell Monday July 16 and died two days later at a hospital, [Argus Leader](#) reported Monday.

“To the best of the plaintiff’s knowledge and understanding, the HCJ correctional officers who were on duty and supervising Mr. Pomani over the weekend became increasingly concerned that he was having a serious medical issue from what they could observe about his physical condition,” the lawsuit says.

Hughes County Sheriff Darin Johnson told [Argus Leader](#) in an email that he was not aware of the lawsuit and that the jailhouse nurse, Jaclyn Lowitz, no longer works for the county .

The lawsuit names Hughes County, Lowitz, and the former sheriff of Hughes County, Mike Leidholt, in Pomani’s death. The lawsuit says Pomani’s civil rights were violated. It seeks a monetary award for his estate, which includes a minor child and several siblings.

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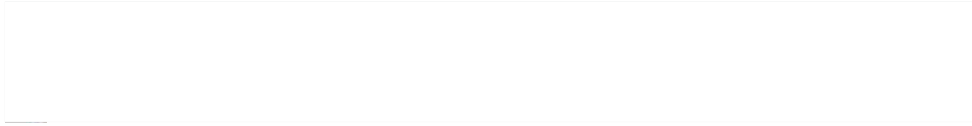
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