

MACOMB COUNTY

FBI investigating death at county jail

By Julie Snyder

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MACOMB COUNTY — The FBI recently began reviewing the case of a Roseville man who died while in custody at the Macomb County Jail last year.

A lawsuit was filed in March 2015 by the family of a Macomb County Jail inmate, David Stojcevski, 32, who died while serving time for an unpaid traffic ticket, court records show.

According to the wrongful death suit filed in U.S. District Court in Detroit, Stojcevski died after serving 16 days of a 30-day sentence.

On Sept. 28, Sheriff Anthony Wickersham met with the FBI supervisory senior agent of the Detroit-Macomb County Resident Agency Office in reference to the circumstances and investigation surrounding the June 27, 2014, death.

A press release from the Sheriff's Office said Wickersham provided FBI investigators with the completed investigation, details of an internal investigation and approximately 240 hours of in-cell video footage.

"I promote transparency within my office and look forward to the findings of the FBI," Wickersham stated in the release. "Any death that occurs in the Macomb County Jail is tragic, not only to the family of the deceased, but to the men and women of the Sheriff's Office who oversee the care and custody of our 1,200 inmates daily.

"Due to the current lawsuit, I am unable to comment on the in-custody death," Wickersham also noted in the release.

Stojcevski was sentenced to jail after he reportedly failed to pay an outstanding reckless driving ticket of \$772.

The lawsuit states that Stojcevski was jailed following a warrant sweep on June 11, 2014. According to the lawsuit, he underwent a medical and psychological evaluation, at which time it was learned by jail staff and staff from Correct Care Solutions LLC, the health care company contracted with the jail, that Stojcevski was on a number of prescriptions to help with a drug addiction and that he "had a potential for withdrawal." Before entering the jail, he was reportedly taking prescribed Methadone, Oxycodone and Xanax for pain associated with his recovery.

Officials from Correct Care could not be reached for comment by press time.

The lawsuit states that Stojcevski was given a talk about opiate withdrawal, and “it was recommended contacting a health care provider on-call immediately for any of following: seizures, delirium, patient appears dehydrated or otherwise clinically unstable.”

He was also reportedly given a suicide watch screening.

A “psychiatric screening confirmed that there was no current psychotropic medications, no history of psychiatric hospitalization, and no history of outpatient mental health treatment,” the court record shows.

According to the lawsuit, Stojcevski was placed in a medical detox unit at the jail, and three to four days into his incarceration he reportedly asked staff if he would be receiving his medications. According to the lawsuit, he was told that none had been ordered.

At around 7:50 a.m. on June 17, Stojcevski was taken in for a medical exam after a corrections deputy observed him lying on his back blinking, but unable to speak, according to court records. It was then that he was placed in a mental health cell.

On the afternoon of June 17, the lawsuit states that another corrections deputy indicated in notes to mental health officials that Stojcevski began “hallucinating and talking to people that are not there, and also stated that he died earlier today.” Another deputy reportedly observed him sitting on the floor and commenting that “all of his organs, but 10 percent of his heart, was removed and his arms shredded a couple of days ago.”

Stojcevski’s condition reportedly worsened over the next several days, and he was found unable to breathe at around 5:20 p.m. on June 27, at which time he was taken to McLaren Macomb Hospital, where he was pronounced dead. The cause of death was “acute withdrawal from chronic Benzodiazepine, Methadone and opiate medications,” and the approximate interval between onset of the cause of death and the death itself was “weeks.” An autopsy indicated the same, with the addition of “dehydration, hypothermia and seizure/seizure-like activity,” the lawsuit states.

Vladimir Stojcevski, David Stojcevski’s younger brother, was reportedly jailed at the same time on an outstanding warrant for driving with a suspended license. Like David, the lawsuit states that Vladimir was on several prescribed narcotics, including Neurontin, Klonopin and Norco, prior to incarceration.

The lawsuit states that Vladimir Stojcevski, 30, had also been sentenced to 30 days for not paying his \$665 fine. During the time of his incarceration, the lawsuit claims he experienced seizures, uncontrollable vomiting and incontinence.

The lawsuit alleges that he was taunted by other inmates and jail staff, which caused him to suffer “physical and mental injury, great indignity, embarrassment and ridicule.”

Vladimir Stojcevski also claims that he was in a cell for two days before being transferred to a detox unit. He was ultimately approved for release on June 23 for hospital treatment.

The lengthy list of defendants named in the suit include Correct Care Solutions and Wickersham, who has declined to comment as the case is still in early litigation.

Macomb County's corporation counsel, John Schapka, said that from what he's learned about the case, he's "confident the county will prevail."

The plaintiff's attorneys, Harold Perakis and Robert Ihrle, did not respond to requests for comment by press time.

The suit goes on to claim that the defendants listed in the suit did little to help David Stojcevski, and that someone at the jail could have easily confirmed and filled the medications he had been prescribed prior to incarceration.

A video taken from the jail, which shows a naked David Stojcevski during his final days, is being used as evidence. The lawsuit states that he lost 50 pounds during those 16 days of incarceration.

The suit seeks \$75,000 in damages.