



Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

THIEN HO
District Attorney

DATE: September 7, 2023

TO: Captain Vanessa Vaden, Commander
Sacramento County Sheriff's Office
Correctional Services Unit
651 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

FROM: Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

RE: In-Custody Death – Joseph Hayes Holyfield (DOB 11-12-1965)
SSO Report No. 22-155925
Date of Incident – 05/29/2022

The above case was referred to this office for the review of the circumstances surrounding the death of inmate Joseph Hayes Holyfield at Sutter Medical Center on May 29, 2022.

Holyfield was arrested and booked into the Sacramento County Main Jail on March 23, 2022. He was charged with violations of California Health and Safety Code sections 11352 (sale or transportation of methamphetamine), 11378 (sale or transportation of methamphetamine), and 11364 (possession of narcotics paraphernalia).

After his admission to the Main Jail, it was determined that Holyfield had significant pre-existing medical conditions, including congestive heart failure. Between March 28 and May 27, Holyfield was transported to outside hospitals for medical treatment six times for a total of 26 days.

During his last hospital visit from May 20-27, medical staff at Sutter Medical Center informed Holyfield that he was not expected to survive. Holyfield chose to be placed in hospice care and signed a Do Not Resuscitate order (DNR). On May 27, Holyfield was returned to the Main Jail and placed in a cell in the medical infirmary.

At approximately 9:00 p.m. on May 28, Holyfield was found unresponsive in his cell by jail medical staff. Resuscitation efforts were not performed due to Holyfield's DNR order. Holyfield was transported to Sutter Medical Center. He was pronounced deceased on May 29, 2022, at approximately 5:36 a.m.

Main Jail surveillance video of the infirmary unit was reviewed. It depicts events consistently with how they are described above.

An autopsy was performed by Dr. Jason Tovar, a pathologist with the Sacramento County Coroner's Office. He determined Holyfield's cause of death to be congestive heart failure due to methamphetamine-induced dilated cardiomyopathy. The manner of death was classified as natural.

No evidence of criminal misconduct is presented or suggested in any of the supporting reports. Accordingly, the District Attorney's Office will take no further action in this matter.

cc: Sacramento Sheriff Lieutenant Janae Galovich
Rosa A. Vega, Sacramento County Coroner's Office
Francine Tournour, Sacramento County Office of Inspector General