

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 2, 2019

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Mr. Daniel R. Levinson
Inspector General
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
330 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

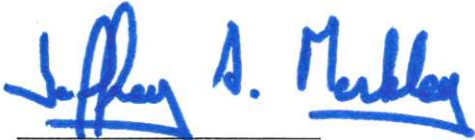
Dear Secretary Azar and Mr. Levinson:

I write with great sadness and urgency to request a thorough investigation regarding the death of a third young unaccompanied child while in the care of the U.S. immigration detention system. In this case, a 16-year-old unaccompanied boy from Guatemala was repeatedly transferred between local hospitals and the Southwest Key Casa Padre facility in Brownsville, Texas, until his death on April 30, 2019. This news is extremely disturbing and Americans are rightfully alarmed by yet another child's death while under our government's custody.

To address this senseless tragedy, I write to formally request that the Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement as well as the Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General immediately open an investigation into the circumstances of this boy's death, and whether sufficient procedures are in place to ensure the health and safety of children in the care of the Office of Refugee Resettlement. I further request that Secretary Azar or his designee provide a substantial status update on the progress of this investigation to Congress no later than May 16th, 2019.

We can all agree that this death should never have happened, and we must take immediate action to ensure other children do not suffer the same fate. I look forward to your prompt response to this matter.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator