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Posted at 3:20 PM ET. 12/28/2010

Inmate suit can proceed: Judge

By The Associated Press

A lawsuit claiming a Kansas-based inmate health care provider failed to provide adequate treatment to a mentally ill Virginia jail inmate who died of dehydration can move forward, a judge has ruled.

Farah Saleh Farah, 24, died Jan. 23, 2008, after being held in the Alexandria jail for 13 days for a probation violation for having a concealed handgun. Off his medications, Farah refused food and water for several days before asking for a doctor, an IV and some ginger ale that never came, the lawsuit said.

Farah's sister, Obah Farah Walker, filed the lawsuit against Correct Care Solutions and three employees in September in U.S. District Court in Alexandria. A federal judge denied a request to dismiss the case earlier this month, allowing it to proceed.

"Severe dehydration is painful and debilitating, and Farah suffered greatly before he finally lapsed into unconsciousness," the lawsuit said. "This result could and would have been avoided had defendants acted consistently with their constitutional, contractual and professional duties."

The company, which provides health care services to jails and prisons across the country, did not respond to a call seeking comment Tuesday.

In a response filed with the court, the company denied responsibility, saying it was not contracted to provide mental health care, food or water to inmates. It also said the injuries "were caused by the acts or omissions of others" over whom the company has no control.

Correct Care Solutions, a Kansas corporation with headquarters in Tennessee, gets about \$1.2 million a year to provide medical services at the jail in a contract that began in 2005. Its contract expires at the end of the month, and a city spokeswoman said bidders are being interviewed.

"The only reason folks are not generally appalled at what passes for health care in American jails and prisons is that they are happily ignorant of it," said Victor M. Glasberg, an Alexandria attorney representing

Born in New York City, Farah moved with his family to Alexandria in 1991. When he turned 18, he began having problems and was soon diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia.

The lawsuit said Farah was "functional, social, competent and friendly" when he was on his medication, but when he was not he would starve himself and refuse water, among other things. His family had taken him to the hospital for dehydration on several occasions.

In 2007, Farah was arrested for carrying a concealed handgun. While on probation, he stopped taking his medications and wound up back in jail. While there, he refused his medication and ate or drank "virtually nothing" after his first few days of incarceration, the lawsuit said.

In a sworn statement, deputy sheriff Chris O'Dell said Farah's worsening condition was apparent to staff, who called in nurses with Correct Care Solutions to evaluate him

"While he was always thin, in his last few days at the jail he looked positively cadaverous," O'Dell said.

Two days before Farah's death. Farah asked for a doctor, an IV and ginger ale, and a nurse was called. The lawsuit said the nurse provided no care, nor did she give Farah anything to drink.



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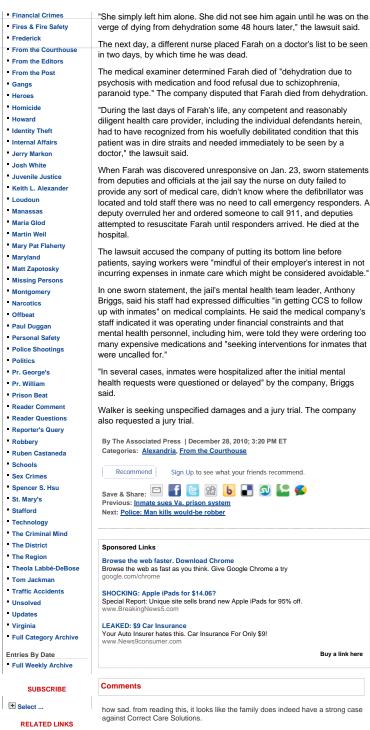
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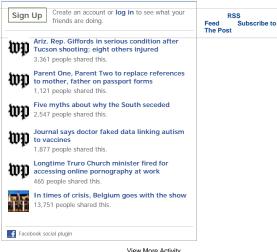
Good luck to the family. I hope they collect big.

Posted by: MarilynManson | December 28, 2010 3:48 PM | Report abuse

I cannot believe that in modern times, when someone with a chronic illness unfortunately finds themselves in jail, that they'd be denied their medication, or especially a trip to the hospital once its obvious their condition has become desperate. CCS said their mental-health personnel were ordering too many expensive meds? Welcome to the world of mental-health treatment, where pretty much every patient relies on medication that often spell the difference between life and death.

This is why private contractors have no business providing 'health services' in places like jails where patients have no alternative option but to rely on them; yet the company's mission isn't to provide patients with the best care possible - their mission is to provide their bottomline with the best care possible.

I hope the family takes 'em for all they're worth - the City of Alexandria, CCS, and the nurse herself who refused to so much as lift a finger to help a man who wa dying a painful death.



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