



---PLEASE FORWARD TO COUNSEL AND INSURER IMMEDIATELY---

October 21, 2024

Via First Class Mail, Facsimile, and Electronic Mail

Multnomah County Risk Management
Mail Code 503/4
501 SE Hawthorne Blvd., Suite 400
Portland, OR 97214
Phone: 503-988-6668
Fax: 503-988-5758

Cc: Jenny Madkour, County Counsel, jenny.m.madkour@multco.us

RE: Tera Ann Harris – **Tort Claim Notice**

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter serves as a Tort Claim Notice, pursuant to ORS 30.275, on behalf of the estate and family of Tera Ann Harris for claims arising from the actions or inactions of Multnomah County's employees and/or agents. Ms. Harris's family has several potential federal and state claims based on the tortious actions of Multnomah County that resulted in the death of Tera Ann Harris in custody on October 26, 2023, at the age of 51.

Ms. Harris entered Multnomah County custody on December 30, 2021. She was housed at the Multnomah County Detention Center. Ms. Harris had multiple chronic health issues that were documented in her medical chart. On October 25, 2023, Ms. Harris reported that she was feeling cold and nauseous. She saw a medical provider, who told her to lay down and be on bedrest. On or around 10:00 PM on October 25, Ms. Harris told a deputy that she felt like she was going to pass out, but a provider refused to see her, stating they'd already spoken with her that day.

On October 26, 2023, first at 1:54 AM, then again at 9:30 AM, Ms. Harris spoke to medical staff and complained of pain in her back, arm, and flank. She also reported shortness of breath. Ms. Harris was scheduled for a medical visit in the afternoon of October 26, where she reported that her entire spine felt like it was on fire and that she had knee pain. Medical providers

Oregon Justice Resource Center
Civil Rights Project
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at the Multnomah County Detention Center dismissed her concerns and sent her back to her cell.

At 4:37 PM on October 26, Ms. Harris was able to stand at the door of her cell. By 5:11 PM, Ms. Harris was found on the floor of her cell, unresponsive. Deputies alerted medical staff and called AMR to respond to the scene. After resuscitation efforts, she was pronounced dead at 5:40 PM. In violation of county policy, Multnomah County Detention Center employees began to remove items from Ms. Harris's cell immediately.

Ms. Harris had a history of multiple ongoing medical conditions, of which Multnomah County Detention Center was aware. Despite multiple requests for medical assistance in the days leading up to and including the day of her death, Multnomah County employees failed to take her concerns seriously and adequately address her symptoms and pain.

Ms. Harris is survived by six daughters, who are grieving the untimely loss of their mother. Ms. Harris had reached out to her family multiple times in the days leading up to her death and expressed her fear that deputies were retaliating against her, that she was in pain, and that she was not receiving proper medical care.

Between May and October of 2023, seven people died in Multnomah County custody. Multnomah County's failure to provide adequate medical care, substance use treatment, and mental health support to people in custody was fatal to Ms. Harris. Ms. Harris's estate and surviving family intends to pursue any and all legal claims, including but not limited to claims for negligence and wrongful death, and other claims for damages, as well as claims under 42 U.S.C § 1983 for the violation of their Eighth and Fourteenth Amendment rights. Ms. Harris's family's civil action may include claims for economic and non-economic damages, injunctive, and declaratory relief. They may also seek to recover all costs and attorney fees associated with any civil action under applicable law.

By this letter, you and your client are hereby given **notice not to destroy, conceal, or alter any potential evidence, whether physical or digital, regarding the claims made in this notice.** Such evidence may include video of the event, written notes, photographs of injuries, and any other documents potentially pertaining to the event.

The above-described facts and claims are set forth for the purpose of providing notice pursuant to ORS 30.275 and are not intended to be an exhaustive recounting of all potentially relevant facts and witnesses. The facts and claims detailed above are intended to be construed as

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broadly as possible.

At your earliest convenience please forward notice of receipt of this notice. Thank you for your anticipated cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' and 'C' followed by a flourish.

Juan C. Chavez
Attorney at Law

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