

June 24, 2020

IIU concludes investigation into death of adult male following arrest and detention in Oxford House

The Independent Investigation Unit (IIU) has concluded its investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death of an adult male, which occurred two days after his arrest and detention at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) detachment in Oxford House.

On March 26, 2020, the RCMP detachment in Oxford House received a report that an adult male was causing a disturbance at the Oxford House nursing station. Two RCMP members attended and found the male sitting in a wheelchair, highly intoxicated. The male was arrested for causing a disturbance, and subsequently lodged in a cell at the Oxford House detachment.

Several hours later, RCMP members entered the cell and noted the male was breathing, but unresponsive, at which point he was returned to the nursing station. Nursing station staff gave no indication that the male's condition was serious. However, on March 30, 2020, a band chief advised the RCMP that the male had passed away at Winnipeg's Health Sciences Centre on March 28.

As the matter concerned the death of a person that may have resulted from the actions of a police officer(s), the IIU was mandated to investigate in accordance with section 66(4) of The Police Services Act. IIU investigators were assigned to the investigation.

Information obtained by IIU investigators included:

- officers' notes and reports
- occurrence summary report
- cell guard log book
- prisoner forms
- cell video
- medical reports for the affected male
- medical examiner report

Evidence showed there were regular checks of the male while he was in RCMP custody. In addition, there was no evidence of force applied by any RCMP officer during the affected person's interactions with police, or that the affected person sustained any injury during his custody at the RCMP detachment.

The medical examiner's post-mortem investigation concluded the cause of death was from:

- bacterial meningitis
- chronic alcohol abuse
- natural causes

As the investigation determined there was no causal connection between any act or omission by the RCMP and the subsequent death of the affected male, the IIU's mandate to investigate has been fulfilled, and accordingly, the file is now closed.

The civilian director's report is available online at www.iumanitoba.ca. The details of the investigation were first announced on March 31, 2020.

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Media inquiries may be directed to:
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Information on the IIU can be found at www.iumanitoba.ca or at www.twitter.com/IIUManitoba