



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

June 17, 2026

The Hon. Markwayne Mullin
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Hon. David J. Venturella
Acting Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th St., SW
Washington, D.C. 20536

Secretary Mullin and Acting Director Venturella:

I write regarding deeply disturbing reports¹ that at least three individuals have suffered suspected overdoses at Immigration and Custom Enforcement's (ICE) Camp East Montana immigration detention facility in El Paso. These incidents raise urgent questions about detainee safety, medical oversight, mental health care, and basic accountability inside a federally operated detention center in our community.

According to 911 calls obtained through an open records request, emergency crews responded to two suspected overdoses at Camp East Montana within less than 24 hours of one another. The calls, placed by medical staff, reportedly involved two men, ages 35 and 34, on May 23 and May 24, 2026. According to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the incidents were related to an overdose of psychiatric medication and a "self-harm" incident.² After receiving medical care, both men are now back at Camp East Montana in stable condition, and one individual is currently being monitored by ICE medical staff. Emergency calls also show that a third suspected overdose at Camp East Montana took place at the end of February. These incidents are profoundly alarming, but they do not exist in a vacuum.

Since Camp East Montana began operations in August 2025, my office, advocates, and the El Paso community have raised grave concerns regarding the facility's conditions, including but not limited to, failures in detainee safety, grossly inadequate medical care, and operational deficiencies. Earlier this year, agents with ICE's own Office of Detention Oversight conducted an inspection of Camp East Montana over a 48-hour period and identified 49 separate standards

¹ [Overdoses reported at El Paso ICE detention center](#)

² [Camp East Montana overdoses explained by DHS.](#)

violations³ at the facility. Collectively, this misconduct raises serious questions about whether the Department of Homeland Security and ICE are capable of operating this facility and meeting even their own most basic, internal standards.

At a minimum, the public deserves answers as to how three individuals were able to potentially overdose inside a federal detention facility.

- According to DHS, psychiatric medication was involved in at least one of the potential overdose incidents on May 23 and May 24, 2026⁴. How were detainees able to access large enough quantities of medication to cause an overdose while under federal supervision?
- Which existing safeguards failed to prevent three separate suspected overdose incidents? What monitoring procedures were ignored or inadequate?
- If illicit controlled substances were involved, how did those substances enter Camp East Montana in the first place?
- Have any staff, contractors, or detainees been implicated in the introduction of contraband?
- Is DHS, ICE, or any other entity conducting an active investigation into these incidents?
- If so, what is the status of those investigations? And what do these failures say about the contractor's ability to maintain safety and operational control inside Camp East Montana?
- What accountability will exist for the contractor?
- Following their return to Camp East Montana, what follow-up care have the individuals who experienced suspected overdoses receive?
- What is the protocol for mental health care following incidents of self-harm?

Equally troubling is the possibility that these suspected overdoses may not have been accidental. According to DHS, at least one of the incidents that occurred on May 23 and May 24, 2026 involved attempted self-harm⁵, which raises harrowing questions about mental health treatment and suicide prevention inside the facility.

- What warning signs were missed?
- Were these individuals previously identified as vulnerable or at risk?
- Were required⁶ interventions conducted?
- Or were clear signs of distress ignored until emergency responders had to be called?

These incidents cannot simply be dismissed as isolated medical emergencies. Three separate people are suspected of having overdosed inside a federal detention facility while entirely under

³ [ERO El Paso Camp East Montana, El Paso, TX, February 10-12, 2026](#)

⁴ [Camp East Montana overdoses explained by DHS](#)

⁵ [Camp East Montana overdoses explained by DHS](#)

⁶ [Microsoft Word - suicide_prevention_and_intervention.doc](#)

the supervision and control of the United States government. That reality alone demands immediate scrutiny.

The Department of Homeland Security bears sole legal obligation to ensure the safety and dignity of every individual placed within its custody. I have been sounding the alarm about serious concerns with the contractor at Camp East Montana since the facility first opened. During every oversight visit I have conducted at the facility, my team and I have flagged the many issues we observed or learned about during the visit for local ICE personnel. But little has changed or improved significantly over time. These recent suspected overdoses are yet another example of a contractor unable to meet federal standards. I look forward to learning more about these incidents and the plan for accountability and prevention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Veronica Escobar". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress