

SALT LAKE CITY — Utah prison officials fired two workers on Thursday and disciplined three others after investigating the death of an inmate who went without dialysis for days when providers failed to show up for treatment,

A physician assistant and supervising nurse at the Utah State Prison in the Salt Lake City suburb of Draper were fired, according to Department of Corrections spokeswoman Brooke Adams. Another supervising nurse was demoted, as was the prison's clinical services director, who will serve as just a doctor at the prison.

Another nurse was given a 40-hour suspension.

Adams declined to name any of the employees but said they all had some responsibility for seven inmates who were waiting for missed dialysis appointments in April.

One of those inmates, 62-year-old Ramon C. Estrada, died after two days from an apparent heart attack related to kidney failure.

The state medical examiner has not completed an autopsy report on Estrada, but Adams said a preliminary investigation shows the lack of treatment may have contributed to his death.

Technicians with Sandy-based South Valley Dialysis, a University of Utah medical clinic, were scheduled to arrive at the prison for appointments on April 3 and the next day but did not show up.

Estrada died April 5, less than three weeks before he was set to be paroled.

He had been in prison since August 2005 on a rape conviction and was believed to have been living in the U.S. illegally, Adams said. He would have been turned over to the U.S. Marshals

Service when his sentence was complete, she added.

The University of Utah's health care system has said two of its dialysis technicians had switched shifts that weekend and one of them forgot about the schedule change and the appointments.

The two technicians have been disciplined, but they remain employees, according to University of Utah Health Care system spokeswoman Kathy Wilets.

The prison has not released details about what actions its own employees took after the missed appointments, including if they tried to contact anyone at South Valley Dialysis.

The Department of Corrections hired a Utah health care consulting firm to review Estrada's death and the prison's medical program. That report and an investigation by the prison's law enforcement bureau are expected to be finished within about three months, Adams said Thursday.

Estrada's son, Jose Estrada, who lives in Edcouch, Texas, has filed a wrongful death lawsuit against officials at the prison and dialysis clinic, accusing them of violating his father's civil rights by failing to give him treatment. Prison and dialysis officials have not responded to the complaint and no court hearings have been held yet in the case

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