

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1009

September 25, 2020

The Honorable Kenneth T. Cuccinelli II, Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Deputy
Secretary for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave., S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20593

Dear Mr. Cuccinelli:

I write to express my grave concerns about the allegations of medical malpractice at the Irwin County Detention Center (ICDC) in Ocilla, Georgia, which were contained in a recent whistleblower complaint filed with the Office of the Inspector General for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS OIG).¹ This complaint, which includes serious allegations of medical mistreatment surrounding hysterectomies, is extremely disturbing and raises significant concerns about the health and safety of detainees in my state. You have announced that you have requested that the DHS OIG review these allegations and that your office will be leading a separate, concurrent investigation.²

I urge you to prioritize this investigation and to swiftly provide the public with a clear, vetted, and accurate picture of the situation at the ICDC. Additionally, I request the following information:

- What process will your audit team be using to investigate these allegations?
- Has your audit team developed a specific timeline for conducting their investigation? If so, please share a copy.
- The *Washington Post* reports that Priyanka Bhatt, the lead investigator for the complaint at Project South, stated “that she did not speak to or identify any women who had undergone a hysterectomy” and that “she included the allegations to spark an investigation into their validity.”³ Since beginning your investigation, have you or your audit team discovered any records that speak to the validity of these claims?
- The Georgia Department of Community Health has designated Irwin County as a medically underserved area. Does ICE believe that there is ample medical capacity to

¹ Project South, Whistleblower Complaint, September 14, 2020. <https://projectsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/OIG-ICDC-Complaint-1.pdf>.

² Alexandra Desanctis, “Exclusive: DHS to Investigate Allegation of Mandatory Hysterectomies Performed on Detained Women,” *National Review Online*, September 16, 2020. <https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/exclusive-dhs-to-investigate-allegation-of-mandatory-hysterectomies-performed-on-detained-women/>.

³ Nick Miroff, “Hospital where activists say ICE detainees were subjected to hysterectomies says just two were performed there,” *Washington Post*, September 22, 2020. https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/ice-detainee-hysterectomies-hospital/2020/09/22/aaf2ca7e-fcfd-11ea-830c-a160b331ca62_story.html.

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care for the detained population at the ICDC? If not, what steps will ICE be taking to ensure that the detained population at the ICDC will be able to receive adequate medical care?

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



David A. Perdue
United States Senator