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ICE doctor may have performed unwanted hysterectomies to defraud DHS

New details from an investigation into a Georgia-based doctor who performed unwanted hysterectomies on migrant women in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody found the man to be "not competent" and indicated he may have performed unnecessary and invasive procedures on patients to inflate payment from the government. A previously unreleased letter caps an investigation into Mahendra Amin, who worked as a contractor in an ICE facility in Georgia and was reported by a nurse in the facility who filed a whistleblower complaint alleging he removed women's uteruses without their consent. "My concern is that he was not competent and simply did the same evaluation and treatment on most patients because that is what he knew how to do, and/or he did tests and treatments that generated a significant amount of reimbursement without benefiting most patients," wrote Tony Ogburn, a doctor asked to review Amin's file as part of a joint investigation by the House Homeland Security Committee and the House Oversight and Reform Committee. Additional letters from the committees Monday ask for a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) briefing on the matter and inquire how the Georgia Composite Medical Board plans to respond. "We are concerned that Dr. Amin may have been performing unnecessary surgical procedures to defraud DHS and the federal government without consequences. We are also concerned that people at other detention facilities may be receiving similarly inappropriate or inadequate medical treatment," the committee wrote in its letter to DHS. Ogburn's letter details a pattern of Amin doing more invasive "D&C" procedures to take samples - rather than doing an in-office biopsy, a less invasive and less expensive procedure. It was something Ogburn found was part of "a pattern of performing the same surgery . on many patients no matter what their condition was." The review also found almost all ultrasounds conducted by Amin found conditions allegedly requiring surgery. And within those who received surgery under Amin, the review found an unusually large number of patients were deemed to have both endometriosis and adhesions, something Ogburn said was "very unlikely that such a high proportion of patients would have both findings." Ogburn also noted that Amin had the "unusual" practice of preprinting all consent forms and packaging them together. He also found patients were "rarely offered any alternative therapies" for their gynecological issues other than surgery. "Patients that clearly had an indication for hysterectomy as an option did not have that option presented to them. Often evaluation/treatment did not address their primary issue with recommendations for sustainable relief but instead he did a variety of tests and surgery that did them little or no good, and potentially caused harm," Ogburn wrote. DHS in May ended its contract with the facility where Amin worked, which was run by private prison company LaSalle Corrections. But the committees stressed the need for DHS to ensure the same practices aren't being carried out in any other facility. "DHS has thus far identified only two detention facilities as unsuitable for housing ICE detainees after more than six months of review, even though the Committees' investigations have identified serious concerns about many others," they wrote in their joint letter asking DHS for a briefing on the matter. DHS said it is still reviewing detention policies and practices. "In May, Secretary Mayorkas issued a memo directing U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to close two detention facilities, and ICE has been actively working with the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, the DHS Office of the Inspector General, and the DHS Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman to ensure that detention facilities are held to the appropriate health and safety standards," an agency spokesperson said in a statement. "Secretary Mayorkas continues to evaluate DHS detention policies and will be issuing additional immigration-related policy memos, including memos addressing immigration detention."