Arlington Co. jail, sheriff, medical staff sued for $10 million following death of inmate

ARLINGTON, Va. (7News) - Plaintiffs representing Darryl Becton, an inmate who died under suspicious circumstances at Arlington County Detention Facility in 2020, have filed a $10 million wrongful death lawsuit against the jail, the Arlington County Sheriff, and several members of the jail's medical staff who are contracted through Corizon Health, Inc. According to an attorney representing Becton's family, this is the 7th inmate to die at the jail in recent years. All were people of color, an Arlington County NAACP spokesperson said, who attended a Friday press conference where the lawsuit was announced. The lawsuit, filed in Arlington County Circuit Court, alleges that Becton, 46, was left unattended and was untreated for serious medical conditions after being admitted to the jail on September 29, 2020. Becton was admitted for probation violation. The lawsuit says during his intake process, he informed jail officials he had an opioid addiction, had suffered from withdrawal in the past, and expected to experience withdrawal again being incarcerated. He also told jail officials he suffered from hypertension and cardiovascular disease. Two days later, according to jail medical records, in the early morning hours of October 1, Becton had a blood pressure reading of 191/102, the suit contends. "He had a [reading] of 191 over 102, It's called a hypertensive emergency, an attorney representing the Becton estate said. "He was just being casually monitored by the nursing staff. This did not have to occur. His conditions should have been treated immediately." Becton was pronounced dead later that day around 5 p.m., after a visiting counselor checked him in his cell where he was found nonresponsive. The details between the medical emergency the morning of Oct. 1 and Becton's time of death are inconsistent, an attorney said. "At 6:59 a.m. on October 1, 2020, an incomplete set of vitals was taken by an unidentified Corizon Health employee. Thereafter, all monitoring, observations, and treatment of Mr. Becton simply ceases. Mr. Becton's medical record contains a recorded encounter at 2:34 p.m., but that alleged encounter is highly dubious. "Defendant Antoine Smith - a licensed practical nurse and Corizon Health employee - has been criminally charged with falsifying patient records, upon information and belief, in connection with Mr. Becton," the lawsuit states.